

CHARLES

AND

CHARLOTTE.

V O L . I

CHARLES



CHARTER

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CHARLES
AND
CHARLOTTE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



Heaven first taught Letters for some Wretches aid;
POPE'S ELOISA.

L O N D O N:
Printed for WILLIAM LANE, Leadenhall-Street,
MDCCLXXVII.

C. H. A. R. L. S.



RIGHT HONORABLE

COUNTESS OF DERBY.

M. A. D. A. M.

THE Hon. Countess I have for your Ladyship, bows, from content-
plating the pretived pa-
rity of your conigal cha-
racter.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
Countess of DERBY.

M A D A M.

THE veneration I
have for your Lady-
ship, flows, from contem-
plating the preserved pu-
rity of your *conjugal* cha-
racter,

racter, encircled by a court, whose general infidelity is sanctified by the licentious taste of the times.

You obstinately persist in the Gothic endearments of Domestic Constancy, though adorned with all those personal graces which provoke the impertinence of the most seducing solicitations: and you have fortitude enough to prefer *family felicity* to the *etiquette* of an elopement, or the *eclat* of a divorce.

After



After such an acknowledgment, Madam, it sounds inconsistent to shield under your protection, a series of misfortunes, which arise principally from *family differences*. This apparent objection to your Ladyship's patronage, is, however, easily removed. To *whom* can an unfortunate pair so properly apply for sympathy, as to the virtuous and sympathizing ? CHARLES and CHARLOTTE are as singularly as pathetically

tically circumstanced—
 Their distress is directed
 closely to the feeling heart
 — they will meet many a
 scornful sarcasm from the
 pride of *pretended* virtue—
 but from *real* innocence—
 from the C O U N T E S S of
 D E R B Y, they invite the re-
 compence of—a Tear!—

I am
 Your LADYSHIP'S
 most obliged,
 and obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

CHARLES
AND
CHARLOTTE.

LETTER I.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

London.

I LEFT your house this morning, pre-determined never to enter it again ; the shelter I have flown to promises me the utmost security : do not therefore seek after me ; since I am obliged, in the sorrow of my soul, to tell you, that I

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B

should

should be compelled to refuse even the supplications of my beloved Charles, should his vigilance detect my retreat. May you be forever happy, and have the philosophy and prudence soon to forget the unfortunate

CHARLOTTE.

P.S. I trust this to the penny post, to prevent its being traced.
Farewell.



LET-

LETTER II.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

GOD of heaven! Pre-determined
 never to enter my house again.
 —And did the hitherto kind, gentle,
 affectionate Charlotte; form such a
 resolution; and has she had the heart
 to put it in practice—? Inhuman
 girl! What am I to think of this? I
 will instantly fly to all your acquaint-
 ance, and never rest till I again have
 the fugitive Charlotte in the arms of
 the faithful.

CHARLES.

LETTER III.

From the same to the same.

I BEGAN my pursuit at five minutes past eleven in the morning, and I continued it till within a quarter of twelve at night; the cloth and dinner all that time remaining untouched upon the table; for I sent your sister one way, while I went another; but the labour of both hath terminated in disappointment.

I now catch up the pen involuntarily to write to you, without knowing whither to send my letter:

and

and though convinced of this, I continue to write on. My heart is full, and I must discharge some part of its load upon paper: surely your residence will not long be a secret, and then I will send it to you.

Soft a little—'Tis the dead of the night, and the least alarm is heard distinctly. In the moment of expectation the soul sits in the ear, and listens to the approaches of her object—The sound of a coach wheel rolls remotely. May it bring onward the treasure I have lost!

Flattering, fond imagination! The vehicle has past my door, and 'twas

in vain I threw up the sash of the window to wait its stopping.

Why, Charlotte, do you treat me thus? Ungrateful girl, I will retire into my chamber, and think no more about you.

CHARLES.

LETTER IV.

From the same to the same.

ACCURSED is the gift of sensibility. 'Tis the smart that "agonizes at every pore." Ever wretched shall the lover be, in proportion to the fineness of his feelings.

How

How little to be desired is delicacy of passion! The higher degrees of tenderness are distracting; and, if the agitation I am now in should continue long, with what fervency of supplication should I pray for stoicism or apathy, or any other power that deadens the enervating softness of recollection!

I rise from my bed to pen this ejaculation before the dawn of the day. Ah! barbarous Charlotte, what a night have I laboured through? I had resolved to think of you no more, but my heart, unfaithful to its resolutions, will admit no other ideas but those which are connected with love and Charlotte. Instantly sprang

the tear to my eye as I entered the solitary chamber: the late scenes of serenity and interchanged endearment were now altered on the sudden to every thing that is dreary, every thing that is desolate: unpressed was the pillow, which, but the night before, administered the balm of softness to the cheek of beauty; and I found something to awaken a distressful feeling in every object that the taper exhibited to my view.—The toilet was not trusted with its suspended ornaments—the chair was unoccupied which used to sustain your day-dress—but the night robes were hanging idly, and full in view, at the side of the bed: there was nobody to take them
down

down—nobody to wear them. Their mistress had deserted them. I tost about for an hour, and fretted myself into fatigue; an unquiet slumber succeeded only to torture fancy by presenting you to me in dreams.

She gave you to me in colours the most glowing, attitudes the most attractive, and situations impossible to be born. I yielded to the pleasures of imagination, caught her dear figure in my arms, and imprinted upon it the visionary kiss. What was my astonishment—what my anguish, when I awaked to the deception—? If the post of the morning does not bring me intelligence, or if affection does not prevail with you

to

to come yourself—ah, thou fair, returning fugitive—! I shall either lose my senses, or have *reason* left, only to hope for its departure.

Farewell.

LETTER V.

From the same to the same.

THE breakfast table has been covered and uncovered without the tea being made or any thing eaten, and it is near twelve o'clock.

Polly, your sister, has examined your trunks and drawers, out of which

which she says nothing is missing ;
 and, it seems, you are gone without
 either cloaths or money. How shall
 I interpret this? Dreadful images
 rise before me ; and yet—it cannot
 be,—you have no cause. Since the
 day that we met I have affection-
 ately anticipated every wish, and,
 to the utmost of my power, protect-
 ed you from every care—self-destruc-
 tion—! No, no, that can never be ;
 you have too awful a sense of de-
 ity---of duty---and you have no temp-
 tation to rob the world and me of
 an individual so inestimable—the
 more I think, the deeper do I dive
 into perplexities. I will throw away
 the pen and think no more. You
 do not imagine the peace of my soul
 worth

worth a single slip of paper, or one stroke of the pen. Farewell:

You have injured

CHARLES.

LETTER VI.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

SOMETHING is due, I foresee, to the alleviation of that anxiety, which my absence will throw you into. I am therefore hence induced to tell you that I am well and happy, and, upon your solemn engagement of promise never to come in person, will transmit to you my address,

dress, where I shall think myself
honoured by your *correspondence*,
the only connexion that can for the
future take place betwixt Charles
and

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER VII.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

BARBAROUS as is the inhibi-
tion, I solemnly comply with it,
and desire to have your address im-
mediately forwarded to the forsaken

CHARLES.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

CHARLOTTE to CHARLES.

RECEIVE inclosed what you request, and God bless you.

Adieu, CHARLOTTE.

LETTER IX.

CHARLES to CHARLOTTE.

I Send, agreeable to your given direction, the packet I had written at different times since your departure, but I am too ill to add more to it than the now forgotten name of

CHARLES.

LET.

LETTER X.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

I Received your packet, every sentence of which was calculated to afflict me—ah forbear my beloved Charles—forebear to charm me into a relapse! you accuse me of barbarity, when you ought to encourage me in virtue. I have made a sacrifice my dear friend—late as it is, I have made a sacrifice to devotion, and to duty. That I may not however suffer any longer the imputation of cruelty, I will frankly reveal to you the motive—the only motive that could prevail with me to quit the society of Charles.

To

To tell you the whole matter in a single sentence—I have seen a person who hath a greater right to Charles than Charlotte—I have seen—your wife. Ah, sir, what an interview—? unprepared for the scene, how could I sustain it? I sunk under it; and your lady triumphed in all the dignity of privilege, and advantages of argument.—Surely heaven threw her in my way to shew me in blushing colours to her and to myself.—We had never met before, and as the meeting was delayed for more than four years, it was by so much the more awful and insupportable. Yet do not blame her Charles. Whatever may have been your disagreements, and however multiplied the causes

causes that led originally to your disunion, she hath still the right of a married woman, and deserves to be heard. Nor can I complain of her conduct even upon so trying an occasion—she did not insult, she did not execrate: but, pursuing a much nearer way to the heart, she appealed from my passions to my sense of justice, and from my tenderness, to my truth. Oh! Charles, Charles, her pleadings were too pathetic to be resisted—I took her hand and bathed it with my tears, and she followed the advantage she had gained till she obtained that promise, which I have at length had the fortitude to perform.

Severe, I confess to you—severe, even to the verge of distraction, has been the *conflict*. Long I hesitated, long I remained undetermined; and even at last I have been compelled rather to stifle the rising emotions of tenderness precipitately, than act upon the calm principles of deliberation.—Yet I have now been almost a week absent, and am alive: though there is a stand of coaches opposite my window (any one of which would carry me to the only man I love upon earth) I have had the courage to see them drive off and return, without filling a place in any one of them myself.

No

No longer therefore accuse a behaviour that challenges your admiration, even while it afflicts you. My trunk, you may, if you please, forward to my apartment, and my sister (who being ignorant of our real situation had better be still kept so) I would recommend you to send home to her mother in the country, where the news, neither of our separation nor its motive, may ever arrive. Be this as it may, return to you again I never can; and indeed, to shew you the impossibility of it, I have paid a voluntary visit to Cleora, your lawful lady, to assure her we are parted for ever. Nothing therefore remains, but that you endeavour to emulate,

till you surpass, the heroism of the
determined

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER XII.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

(After receiving the foregoing.)

IN the agony of my heart I have
equity enough to praise your he-
roism, though it is dashed with a ro-
mance that ascends to the very summit
of enthusiasm. I now see my fate, and
the continuance of the misery that at-
tends it.

The

The claims of the wife, the lawful lady and the married woman, are all, I see, dancing their fascinations before thee.

Think not, Charlotte, I laugh at laws, or ridicule institutions held sacred and obligatory. Dear girl, I do not laugh at them; but, in my particular case, and in others similar to mine, an ample apology is found in the dictates of nature, reason, and common sense. I will not, nor indeed am I yet calm enough, to ramble into the detail of original grievances—those grievances which produced a separation from the wife of the law, who hath now separated the wife of the soul. Suffice it to

say, it was a rash marriage, and soon repented on both sides: the bitterness of conjugal repentance is beyond every other poignant, and happy is it if *disunion*, rather than perpetuated *disagreement*, results from it. Is this sophistry? — Is this casuistry? no Charlotte, it is simple, didactic argument, ratified by unprejudiced reason, and stamp'd with the sanction of unbigotted sense—I feel as nicely as yourself the force of virtue, and the elegant triumphs of unspotted character, but I see no reason why those, who, upon the evidence of more than two years experience, are unsuited to each other, “join’d, not match’d,” should live janglingly together, merely to pull the tight cord of a connexion

nexion at different ends, and exist miserably under the same roof, for the meagre satisfaction of having it to say, we fight it out friendly, without parting.

Egregious folly! and superstition and slavery in their extremes! you know the whole matter: my situation has been often delineated to you, and I will only desire you to reflect attentively upon it, before I obey your cruel request in relation to your trunk. Ah, Charlotte, how can I bear to see those several ornaments purchased by my own hand in the ostentatious fondness of shewing you to the admiring public as the property of your constant protector—

how can I bear to see these depart into any other dressing-room but that which belongs to you, and in which they are now waiting the return of her who honours them in the wearing. My dear, dear companion, it must not be; the laws of love and life, and reciprocated conjunction of hearts and minds forbid it. Think better—oh, think better of it—throw aside the rigour of those resolutions which can produce no good, and admit those receiv'd ideas which will soften this unnecessary severity, and direct you to the sighing bosom, and open arms of

CHARLES.

LETTER

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

YOU *do* sophisticate Charles, and you are a casuist. Deny it not. Your wife is a fine woman, and you ought to love her: she is chaste, and you ought to live with her. But live with her or not, I have done my duty, and though it should shorten my life, I will still persevere, and fly the open arms of the late beloved Charles as sedulously as if they were filled with poison.

CHARLOTTE.

P. S. If you refuse to send the trunk, make a compliment of it to my sister. I can do without it.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

CHARLES to CHARLOTTE.

MADAM,

I ASK your pardon for detaining any part of your property after it was so peremptorily demanded. I have however now, though late, made restitution of every thing which either your sister's industry or mine, could find about your apartments—I have seen, madam, the trunk containing your dresses, and decorations carried upon the shoulders of a porter, coffin like; and had it been *indeed* your coffin my despair would have been only one degree superior. Heavy as it is,
with

with what a joy should I have stooped to the burden, and been myself the messenger; while the insensible athletic animal who is now such, will be intent only upon the profits of his message, and view only with a vulgar amazement, the form of the fair tyrant who rejects her conquest, and and yet holds in chains her captive.

Your concluding sentiment enters a caveat against further argument, and shortens my letter. It is not, I perceive, the force of virtuous principles drives you from me only, but the poison of aversion you have conceived for those open arms to which you were so tenderly, though I confess so officiously invited. Fear not, I beseech

befeech you madam, the shortness of your life upon my account; it is in no danger from that quarter, and I do not doubt but your health and spirits will continue to encrease in proportion to the length of your absence.

The point is plain enough, and I am sorry your delicacy and ingenuity have been put to such a strait for an expedient. How extremely *à-propos* was your interview with Cleora! and how sincerely do I congratulate you upon the lucky crisis in which it has united inclination and duty. I perceive they have gone in this affair, like friends, well, but unexpectedly met, hand in hand together. Four
years

years possession, is I must own enough to *poison* any body, and it is only for such constant fools as Charles to increase his passion, by gratifying it. I again beg your pardon, and promise to trespass no more upon that time, which you are no doubt employing in more agreeable engagements than reading the letters of a *cast* lover—perhaps the present hour is enlivened by the charms of a new acquaintance, and it may be, in the delirium of female vivacity upon the dear subject of liberty restored—that *paradise regained* to the soul of a woman—the name, I say, and infirmity of the neglected Charles may give additional zest to sprightliness, and enhance the entertainment

entertainment of a delicious *tête-à-tête*.

The victor, I must own, hath a right to imitate the barbarism of Achilles, and draw at the tail of his chariot the corpse of conquest. At this I shall not pretend to cavil. 'Tis the prescriptive right of the tyrant, and the slave must submit. But if there exists any *man* in the creation hardy enough to *partake* your conquest, and to express the impudence of exultation over it—if such a one there is madam, let *him* tremble—for nothing but his life shall pacify my heart, or atone for the sport he has made of my weakness, or my sensibility.

CHARLES.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

CHARLOTTE to CHARLES.

NOW, indeed, Sir, you have nobly exerted yourself, and I ought to express to you my thanks for taking the only method that could make me forget you. Were I not inexcusably weak I *should* do this, but I own you have wounded me: I own that your several sarcasms have gone where you directed them—into the recesses of my heart. Most ungenerous Charles, to interpret that action into the most mercenary meanness, which, I summon the great God that inspired it, to witness, proceeded from principle.

No,

No, Sir; my spirits and health (if I may judge of the future, by the present) are *not* likely to be restored to me in proportion to the length of my absence: nor was the abruptness of my departure the effort of so much ingenuity as you may be pleased to imagine.—

If you are yet capable of doing justice, I desire you to reflect on the various struggles I have at different times had since the commencement of our connection, upon the point that now carried me for ever from you! Even before I saw the lawful Cleora I shed many a tear, and heaved many a sigh at the thought of that injury I was every hour committing

committing against her. Nay, did I not twice before, even in the warmest transports of our tenderness, bring myself to the resolution of leaving you? You pursued, persuaded, prevailed, and brought me back to guilty pleasures. Seeing the life of Charles bound up in the society of Charlotte, I endeavoured again to reconcile myself to my situation. I even adopted, in some degree, the sophistry of your own sentiments. I argued, as an apology, the innocence of my intention; the hearty desire I had to serve your family, the gratitude I owe to the man, who improved my understanding and adorned my manners: and, in short, I took refuge in a thousand plau-

sibilities, rather than be torn on the rack of reflection, and leave a society so inexpressibly dear to me.

Auspicious to the scheme of forgetfulness, it was about this time you know, Sir, that we began our excursions, and took the different tours of England, Ireland, and Scotland. The improvements I made in the course of these journies, the serenity of the seasons in which they were, for the most part, performed, and the attracting benefits of so ingenious a companion as Charles, suspended for a while the kneener sense of an illicit connection. Yet, in the very bosom of bliss I was never so dull as not to know that it

was

was an illicit one; and therefore, proper to be broken. To break it, nevertheless, was far beyond the feebleness of my power. The idea of Charles and all his fascinating qualities, mixt with every image, and made the leading feature of every figure that was formed by the soul. In repugnance to the conduct I ough. to have pursued, I called to my aid all the seductions of imagination, and, when *they* failed, I derived the comforts of self-delusion, even from the pictures of truth—Is he not, said I, industrious to justify my error, while I soothed my passion; is he not the man, who took me up in a more than orphan state, and proved himself to me a father and a friend?

Did he not find me a ruined creature—a poor unfortunate wanderer, who had been just deserted by the villain lord, who, taking advantage of simplicity had robbed my innocence, and turned me unprovided upon the world—? Ought I not to bless the accident then that threw me in the way of this affectionate protector? From what irremediable misery may he not have saved me? How indefatigable has been his tenderness? How assiduous his efforts to support me? How anxious and unremitting his wishes and labours to place me in a way of supporting myself, against that day in which he might want life to exert himself? Was not this my first preceptor?

Wanting

Wanting the attentions of a parent, and an early victim to my credulity, did he not find me stepping into the very border of female violation? Was not our first interview in the very momentous crisis of a woman's fate; and was I not weeping, in the bitter sincerity of my heart, over the prospects of destruction?

Surrounded by calamities like these, did not providence direct Charles to save me, as the guardian angel of an unhappy girl? and has not this very Charles preserved his friendship unbroken, and his fidelity consummate ever since the day of my deliverance?

Arguments like these, strongly seconded by the feelings of my heart, did I frequently exert, till, co-operating with the refinements of your conversation, and the charm I never failed to find in your entertaining company, I had almost brought myself to believe there was nothing extremely wrong in our intercourse.

Lulled, however, by this pleasing lethargy of the senses, and sung to repose by the syren of tenderness, I argued myself into a transient serenity, and indulged the softness which I perceived to be so soothing. We compleated our designs, and returned from our rambles in the
English

English nation and its neighbouring countries, in order to visit together the continent of France. Preparations you know, Sir, were making for our *route* soon after our arrival in London, and the beginning of the next week was fixed for our departure.

In the interim I met with the injured Cleora, who told me in the most affecting manner, that, though she never wished a re-union with you, it would give that peace to her heart which was long lost, if I would tear myself from your embraces. Agonized by her pleadings, and stung by the sense of having wronged her, I fell upon my knee, and, solemnly in that situation *engaged* to do what I *have* done.

I have nothing to do with your family differences Charles, nor shall I listen to the story of either party. Duty and conscience are both concerned in the measure I have taken, and I shall not be made to repent of it, even by the severity of your upbraidings. It was, nevertheless, too much descending from the native dignity of your disposition—too unlike the candour of Charles's character, to suppose a connection of four years' establishment, every day of which produced some evidence of its sincerity, should be sacrificed to the very grossest purposes in the first week's separation. A new acquaintance! What would you insinuate? To what indelicacy do you allude? I have

have a tear now falling upon that part of your letter, and I wish it had the power to blot both the sentiment and the recollection of it out of my memory for ever! With great reluctance shall I admit any ideas that disgrace the elegance of Charles's sensibility. Though duty commands me to quit his protection, my knowledge of his many eminent virtues, incline me to cherish his idea, and still love him for his excellencies. I would most gladly consider him as a friend, a correspondent, and a conspicuous character: and, though we shall never meet again, the sense of my obligations to him, and his own merits, might be a constant source of innocent contemplation to me: why,

why, Charles will you rob me of so agreeable a refuge, perhaps the greatest the whole world has now to afford me. Do you think Sir, then that I can so soon make a transfer of my affections? can I, think you, in so very short a space of time, *command* them from Charles to any accidental object? have I so convenient a heart — so obedient a versality? what do you take me for? but indeed I deserve it all; she who can bring herself to sleep upon an unsanctified pillow, four long twelve months, may well be supposed to perpetrate any thing that is wrong; and therefore I forgive you: although, in justice to myself, I must observe how I shudder, and how the blood runs from my heart,

heart, at the bare suggestion of such perfidy.

Indeed you wrong me ; and I cannot bear you to entertain such ideas: even though by entertaining them yourself, *my* image would be the sooner obliterated. Though you found me a fallen woman, I am not constitutionally a wretch of purchase, Sir. Your many amiable lessons of morality have not been so egregiously misemployed. The virtue you have inculcated, and the volumes you have put into my hand, have produced effects more salutary: nay Charles, it is to your own instructions—to your own cultivation of my head and heart, that I have been induced to undertake

undertake the magnanimity of this action. With respect to resources—such I mean as are necessary, merely necessary to the preservation of human life, it is impossible that I should be destitute of them, while I have health; and the power who encouraged me to a good action will not, I trust, suffer the sharpness of poverty to result from it. But even if he should, I shall eat no longer the bitter bread of adultery, and considering that punishment proportioned to the offence, shall kiss the omnipotent rod without complaining, and supplicate the aids of penitence and patience till my sentence is softened, and the punishment remitted.

For

For the support of life, I have no doubt but that industry will enable me to get a sufficiency. You, Charles, have not suffered me to lead a life of idleness: I am skilled in the elegant labours of the needle: I can embroider: I have some little knowledge of those employments which may assist me from applying to the milliners—nay, and—such has been the effect of your instructions—I am not incapable of undertaking the elementary principles of female education. Here, indeed Charles, I feel a severe stroke from reflection. Who will put any children under the care of a free woman? what parent will trust its rising hopes to one who has herself failed?—how long, alas! will it
be

be before the world can be convinced of my penitence, or my propriety! let this be as it will, my resolution remains firm as at the first, and Charles must be eternally disunited from

CHARLOTTE.

P. S. I received the trunk, and thank you for your care.

Farewell.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

CHARLES to CHARLOTTE.

Too amiable CHARLOTTE.

WHEREFORE do you thus officiously labour to extort my approbation? and wherefore have you not left it in my power to censure you? were there any hard part in your character—had you charitably left me but one single cruelty, on which I might have founded a reasonable complaint, so that I might have ruminated upon it till I had argued myself into aversion, it might have

have been more tolerable : but you are obstinately bent upon murdering me by your goodness, and every moment increase the admiration which I ought to feel daily diminishing. The laws of the land and the prescriptions of custom have thrown the arguments so abundantly on your side, that 'tis impossible to baffle them without seeming to sophisticate. Fool and idiot that I was, to run into the shackle that galls for life, and to bind it like a volunteer slave, on my own leg! and yet, Charlotte, you have assisted Cleora in acting contradictions. Does she not by her own confession militate against a re-union? does she not declare the misery, of which she foresees, it would be productive?

ductive? to what end then—to what end, but the most cruel and unnecessary one, should she wish to effect a separation between Charles and Charlotte? Cleora and Charles entertain not for each other either hatred or love; indifference is the point between them. And what virtuous purpose is likely to arise from the parting, in which she has been instrumental.

But you are, I see, too immersed in established ideas and the customs of a country, to admit a single exception to a general rule: although a minute's reflection would convince you that *my* case and *yours* are such

as should be absolutely set apart from almost every other.

Ah, inflexible Charlotte, wherefore have you shielded your heart from the dear arrows of love under the bulwark of such venerable maxims—maxims, which, be their general tenor ever so admirable, must always allow deviation in certain cases. How easy were it to prove that, in strict speaking, it would be absurd and irrational even to unite again with Cleora. Nay, to put out of the question every other plea, and rely only on the energy of a single argument:—the argument of our mutual *indifference*, is it not (demonstrably) ridiculous to live a loveless

less life with any being? Peculiar circumstances, of temporal distress at the first occasioned my leaving Cleora: I left her with a heart utterly at liberty, and in situations in no degree worse than before I heartily invited, and hastily obtained her hand. Chance, or rather surely the contrivance of some pitying deity, soon afterwards presented before my eye the image of Charlotte. Every thing in human nature that corresponds with the pathetic, united to favour our first interview. It was in the still hour of midnight: 'twas in the hour of misfortune. We were both sufferers: I mourned the barbarity of a mother, embarrassed affairs, and anxieties at home: you

were sinking under the sense of an equal injury. Social sorrows soon suit themselves to the soul, and the impression that is made in such a crisis, is deep and delicate indeed.

I see, methinks, the first scene; and I feel what language and sentiment denies the power to describe. Ah! Charlotte—Think a little upon it!—Prepare for a Picture so particularly interesting. Invoke the powers of imagination, fidelity, and fondness to do it justice.—Lay aside every formal, every unnecessary punctilio, and give, upon so important an occasion, a full scope to the tenderness of nature.—That tenderness, my dear, which was bestowed by the
great

great God of kindness to “ make the
“ nauseous draught of life go down.”

I have, in preparing you for such
a portrait inspired myself. The sub-
ject is not to be withstood.—I dedi-
cate it Charlotte to your sensibility.
—I address it to your Heart. Did I,
in the first Scene, insult you? Did
I insult you with any offer that
could distress or confuse you? No,
Charlotte — some secret impulse it
was that withheld me from the deed:
some god it was, which inclined me
to be inquisitively exact in drawing
from you the history of your unhappi-
ness. The tale was told with a sim-
plicity and bewitching artlessness,
that might have gained credit from

E 3 infidelity,

infidelity, and attracted attention from frolic. Let the tears that I then shed, let the kindness with which I have since cherished you, witness the truth of my tenderness and protection. How were we both affected? how did our sympathy incline us to approach till our cheeks were as the reposing, yet glowing cushions of each other's. Can you forget the trembling throbs that you felt as I pressed your shaking hand upon my bosom. — I withdrew till you undrest, and I appeal to you, if I did not sit like the nurse of your chamber by the side of your bed till morning. I found it absolutely impracticable to treat your misery in any other manner: even your beauty, dazzling as
 it

it was, and in the most trying of all situations, was not able to betray me: I paid my court to your heart—to your situation—to your pathetic circumstances, and to every thing but your person: the charms of which, resplendent as I acknowledge they were, I had no leisure to reflect upon, till I had in some measure soothed the mighty anguish under which you were struggling.

I proposed a retreat in the recesses of the country. Such a retreat, Charlotte, my vigilant affection, (ever wakeful, ever indefatigable) soon provided; and when I had smoothed your own situation, and related to you in the undisguise of my soul, the particulars

particulars of mine, I then ventured (and not *till* then) to mention the wishes, which, after all the little delaying reluctances that endear ultimate consent, were successful.

Tell not me, Charlotte, of the prude's unfeeling formality. Do not suggest to me the sneer which outrageous virtue would cast upon such a transaction. Spirits I know there are (terribly holy, and formidably devout--punctilious as to the minutiae of ceremonials, and negligent of essentials) which would ridicule the delaying reluctances of Charlotte, as artful pretences — What—say they, piously violent—shall *she* who ascends the *nuptial* couch to supply unlawfully,

fully, the place of the lawful—to fill the arms that are awefully *pre-occupied*—who hath, moreover, forfeited her innocence to the seducer, and been reduced to irreputable refuges—shall *she* assume the character of chastity and all its coyneſſes, or, indeed, any of those marks of amiableness which ought to distinguish only married modesty, and maiden decorum—? Fie upon her!

Ah! hard of heart, and shallow of head! illiberal, contracted women! Is it not possible for virtue to *be* independent of forms? is it not possible, in a case like Charlotte's, for the most unspotted purity of mind to survive an accidental violation of person?

person?—But then, you reply, she lived, after all, publicly with the husband of another woman. In any other exigence but her's and mine, it might be impossible to offer a plea of palliation :

“ Let wealth and honour wait the wedded dame;

“ August her deed, and sacred be her fame.”

Far be it from me, far from the most unhappy Charles be it, to blast the laurels, or wither the roses of conjugal life. 'Twere impious, 'twere impracticable. I am not audacious enough to say with Eloisa,

“ Curse

“Curse on all laws but those
which love has made.”

Ah gracious, gracious heaven, that it
had been permitted to blend in *our* con-
nection the laws of love, and of the
land, natural, with moral institutions!
—May never any pair, Charlotte, who
love as *we* love, be reduced by the
tyranny of their situation, to equal
measures: may those whose hearts
are equally tuned by *nature* into equal
sympathy, find a friend in *fortune* to
facilitate their union! Happy—emi-
nently happy they, who are thus af-
flicted, and whose joys receive, in
conformity to the custom of nations,
—
their

their imprimatur of tenderness and possession at the altar.—

Our fates, Charlotte, were unfortunately peculiar, and our resolution to run them together was natural, and, set off as they were by ten thousand delicacies, irresistible. Let not our conduct be proposed as an example to be adopted, where it is even possible for man and wife to live together: but let not our fidelity, after we *had* united, be censured too vigorously, or too incautiously.

Weigh these facts well, and they will tempt you to seek again your long

long accustomed pillow upon the
bosom (the heart under which will
swell to welcome your return) of

CHARLES.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

HO W often, must I repeat—
 how often waft it on the wings
 of the post, that I must never more
 repose on the bosom of Charles.
 Cease, cease then, ah, my dear sedu-
 cer, for pity's sake. Do not con-
 tinue to croud upon me those images
 which it is pernicious to entertain!
 Wherefore—oh thou ungenerous—
 wherefore do you oppose the most
 omnipotent of all human arguments,
 wherefore do you oppose *yourself*,
 betwixt the severely contending pow-
 ers

ers of duty and passion—Ah inhuman! it is not without exertions the most violent, and pangs the most accumulated, that I am able to sustain the conduct I have for the last four days observed. Conscious as you are of the *propriety* of that conduct, forbear, I solemnly conjure you, to address my partiality again upon the only subject which it cannot safely contemplate!

The sketch you have delineated of our intercourse, in its first dear, but unfortunate beginnings, is too boldly coloured, and bears too visibly the delicate touches of a master, for the eye of one, who can trace so lively a likeness betwixt the copy and the original.

original. If then you have any regard to the peace of my mind—any to my prosperity—never present to my view again, so animated or so dangerous a picture: rather, I beseech you, turn that most powerful pen of yours into a chaster style: indulge it in the display of subjects more suited to our circumstances. Direct your fine, but too persuasive genius into the proper channel, and let the strength and vigour of Charles's understanding, rather prevent than debilitate the infirmity of Charlotte's; and besides this, how unfair is it to avail yourself of that very feeling in your favour, which your reason tells you it is inequitable to indulge.

The

The copious effusion of tender tears that flowed, as I suppose you cruelly intended they should, in obedience to the commanding sentiments of your last, have a little relieved my heart, at the expence of exhausting my spirits.

I have acquired once more sufficient composure to write to the man who seems resolved to keep me in constant agitation.

You *did* save me, Charles, from distress the most agonizing; from a state the most dreadful: you *did* unite in your character, all the relations; as a father instructed—as a mother admonished—as a brother protected

—as a sister entertained, and as a husband cherished. Oh Charles, Charles, it is all well, all great, all a noble climax, till we get to the last expression. It was only *as* a husband: it was *like* one, that you cherished me. 'Twas out of your power—oh, the malice of fortune—to *be* one, and as that was the case, we should not have united. I should have found that generosity in your *friendship*, which you ought to have denied me in your *tendernefs*. I might have been the object of your *benevolence*, without—I write the sentence with a blush burning my cheek—without sharing your bed. How would it have redounded to the honour of my Charles, how officiously would the daughters of

of distress have trusted his fame to the echo of posterity, if his bounty had been totally unaccompanied by guilt: if he had rescued an unhappy girl from misery, without bringing her out of one error to lead her into another.

Methinks I now see how Charles might at once have procured my honour, and my happiness: and I, who know the goodness of his heart, wonder the scheme, or something similar to it, escaped him. Might he not have placed the unhappy female far from the delusions of the metropolis, in some sheltering part of the country, where the knowledge of her calamity might never arrive?

There, might she not, under the protection of some decent matron, have learned all the arts of useful life, even till the often transmitted bounty of her absent friend Charles, might be no longer necessary to her subsistence. What room had here been for probation—what scope for innocence recovered; and what immortality—what undecipherable sensations must have attended an action so disinterested, so unmixt—so admirable! Instead of which — but I cannot, I ought not to upbraid you. I acknowledge the delicacy of your deportment when it was the most essential, and when very, very few would have therefore bestowed it. But let us drop the subject: assist me
not

not treacherously, to the recollection of scenes, which I wish, and ought to forget. Surely, surely it is not now a time to receive them in the memory. Ah, Charles, why did not heaven allow our first meeting to have preceded your union with Cleora: then, with what a transport, a transport sanctified by religion, should I——but it is unavailing to wish: we are parted eternally: nor can even such an epistle as your last, adorned as it is with all the glowing graces of language, and artfully addressed to every passion that alarms the sex, make me revolt from that steady principle I have fixt to myself, in the deliberation of my soul, as the rule of my future conduct. If

therefore you set any price upon the pleasures of our continued correspondence—for I will forfeit even your letters rather than read myself into a relapse—let this ultimate, this repeated assurance, satisfy you once for all. In a word, Charles, let it teach your heart to be contented with a gratification, somewhat less terrible than that which would terminate in the perdition of the afflicted, but, alas! still

affectionate

CHARLOTTE.

P. S. You do not mention my sister, but you certainly have sent her to the arms of an innocent and expecting mother, whose want of know-

ledge

ledge in my case, is, perhaps, the only thing that prevents bringing her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

INVULNERABLE, and unrelenting as you are, I have the right of a painter to finish my picture. Hard would it indeed be, were I denied so trifling a liberty as that which the pen allows, when I obey your too rigid injunctions in keeping from the apartment which I know to

contain my treasure. Think, madam—oh, that cold word—think, Charlotte, of the severe restraint I impose upon myself! I know the very house in which you sleep—if you indeed *can* sleep—and yet I desist from going to make enquiries in which I am so much interested.

And are you alarmed by the faintly drawn sketch of our first week's connexion? Alas! how very poor, how very unequal was all which *then* past, when compared to the months, and years that succeeded it! a dew drop to the deep, and main world of waters! Carry your imagination in retrospect to the time when we first yielded to the exigence, and agreed

to

to live in the same house; when, in all tender respects, we agreed to consider ourselves as—united people. Look back to the very night, ever precious to love-sick remembrance, when you first indulged the solicited embrace. Till after the attention of many days, I did not dare to intimate the hopes of a conquered heart, nor even at last, till I had reconciled you to every part of my hapless situation—till we had both lamented the bar that prevented a public sanction. Paint to your fancy the joy that was then realized, when you first permitted me, half consenting, half denying, to draw the curtain betwixt us and every interruption—I can say no more: I refer you to the powers of imagination

imagination—It was not the *unsoul'd*
 debauch of a dissipated pair : it was
 not the delirium of two young
 people, sedulous to snatch the hasty
 revels of a night's voluptuousness !
 but it was the unaffected transport of
 sentiment and taste, of body and
 mind, consolidated : not a vein in our
 hearts that did not thrill to the emo-
 tions of sympathy : animated by the
 fire of real love, not a pulse about us
 that did not leap to salute its hindred
 pulsation. Remember, above all
 things, our next morning meeting
 at breakfast : the sighs which we
 then wafted over the tea-cup : the
 tears which were scarce contained
 within their sluices of crystal : the
 various flushings of the countenance,
 and

and our aukward-enough endeavours to conceal the confusion which was thus rendered the more apparent, all gave silent, but delicious testimony, that the mutual approbation was compleat.

Perhaps you will say, that this might be the energy of juvenile desire: the mere enthusiastic riot of the agitated senses—the transient fever of inflammatory spirits. How easy were it, in opposition to this, to prove its origin from a more pure and permanent source. Reflect, I prithee, fair fugitive, on the scenes which succeeded. Consider what diversity of events happened *after*, to cool the blood, and settle the senses. Examine the train of misfortunes
which

which arose rapidly one out of another. Did not my whole patrimony, and all my hopes of elevated circumstances, sink suddenly before me? did not the hardened creditor then take his advantage of my calamity, and hunt me with a blood-hound industry, from to place? was not my health invaded in consequence of my anxiety, and were we not both reduced to uncertain resources? was not this aggregate of affliction enough to quiet the impetuosity of mere animal inclination? surely it was; but they only rendered *us* still dearer to one another: the burdens were heavy, and each was therefore emulous to carry the greatest load of them: we had even a sort of jealousy

lously lest the one should encroach upon the share of the other. Tenderness and transport presided over our very difficulties—Ah! how often in the desolate moment, when the whole hemisphere of hope was clouded, have we watched the fall of the tear upon the cheek, and kist it away? how frequently have we caught the sigh while parting from the lips? great woes we reconciled into sentiments of moderation; and every gale of good fortune, from whatever corner of her compass it blew, was swelled by love into enchantment: the beauty of a flower; the paint of a tulip; the fragrance of a rose; the sudden lustre of the sun; an evening walk; or the morning prospect

spect over our breakfast, painted by the gay pencil of imagination, were more than a match for the empty purle, the ill-natured accident, or miseries of the greatest magnitude. And, can those who have gone for the service of each other through the fiery trial, ever forget, ever ultimately separate? Of all paradoxes, it is to me the most irreconcilable.

I conjure you then by the memory of our past misfortunes, than which even the recollection of extacies is not more endearing—I conjure you by the memory of our pleasures, of which we have had our proportion—I conjure you by the wishes you cherish for my health; by the many
 miseries

miseries of a situation that calls aloud
 for constant attentions ; in short,
 Charlotte, I conjure, implore, and
 challenge you, by all that you hope,
 and all which you dread, to suffer
 me to enforce the pleadings of my
 heart at *your own lodgings* : I will
 obey every injunction—ah ! thou de-
 lightful tyrant—imposed upon me :
 the click of the clock shall bring
 me to the moment of your assigna-
 tion : I shall enter your apartment
 with all the tremors of a lover, and
 yet I will not, till you permit me,
 speak of love : I will anticipate the
 commands of your tongue, and watch
 the time to depart from the waving
 of your finger, the nod of your head,
 or the turn of your eye—More than
 the

than the power of a sultaness shall attend you in this interview—Only admit me once—to tea, to breakfast — to dine — to sup — I cannot Charlotte—I swear by the heart you have carried forcibly away from me—I cannot, any longer, support your absence. Do not then hurry me into violence, but indulge, for this once, my passion, and trust to my prudence, and my promises. Farewell, farewell.

CHARLES.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

CHARLOTTE to CHARLES.

IS this your solemn engagement?
 pressing for an interview already.
 To what end do you think I left
 you Sir? Was it to give myself a
 few days unnecessary agony, to in-
 volve you in needless calamity, and
 then to repent upon my folly, and re-
 turn again to the errors I have left?
 I am angry that you think me guilty
 of so much inconsistency. What a
 child must you believe me? and
 yet how do you oblige me to be even
 with you. For shame, Sir, for
 shame; you want the philosophy of

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an

an infant. You have devoted several of the years of your youth to the study of the sciences, you are deeply read in virtuous compositions, and yet you are more feeble than the babe.

To be outdone in a good action by a woman, by the very woman whose understanding and heart have been, as it were, the work of your own hands: whom you have made what she is — To let *her* surpass you in fortitude! Blush, blush, and rise into the ambition of excelling her.

From the very arguments that you draw as motives of my return,
I can

I can extract the most forcible reasons for my desisting from a reunion, even supposing that there was no personal criminality attending it.

Wherefore should I hang as a clog at the foot of a man already oppressed by the heavy hand of calamity? whatever you may think, it is no real testimony of regard to share your miseries without being able to relieve them. To behold you struggling with your fate, without the power to better it, and rather adding *to*, than taking *from*, your embarrassments. No, Charles; trust me, we can both do more tolerably alone, at least for the present: in the course of a little time, for.

tune may be generous to one of us, *which*, is a point of no moment: our persons only, and not our purses, are divided: it will be the same thing whether the shower of prosperity falls upon Charles, or Charlotte: I hope neither of us shall at any time be capable of separate interests, and that neither of us shall be too proud to receive assistance at the hand of the other. As to your part, your talents will recommend you, *wheresoever* or *howsoever* you exert them; and you cannot long fail of conquering the inconveniences which at present surround you. Charlotte's society, however dear, was rather an impediment than any thing else, to Charles's advancement, and he will now be
admitted

admitted into connections which were before impenetrable. We may amuse ourselves, my dear friend, with the idea of despising the customs of our country, and the forms of our church : nay, we may attempt to soothe ourselves with the opinions of ourselves, and a narrow circle of our private friends, but if the voice of the public, and the established modes of religion are against us, it will be in vain that we receive a *partial* approbation. It is not only politic, but morally just, that the general clamour should be raised against a couple in our situation. The disagreements that pass under a man's own roof, and the quarrels or feuds which divide the husband from

the wife, do not authorize an open defiance of either the laws of man, or the commands of God : nor will the world, however proper the separation, ever enter into the intricacies of circumstance, or pathetic of passion that throws the divided husband into the arms of another woman. I am still willing to hope, Charles, that our offence will be mitigated by the God of mercy, upon account of the many peculiar temptations and exigences that belonged to it : in strict speaking, perhaps, there may not be any greater degree of guilt in our late connection, than if it had immediately succeeded a divorce from your Cleora : but when I am appealed to by a pleading wife,

who

who charges me with seducing the the affections of a husband; when I am branded by that wife, as the artful and infamous cause of her child's misery, and her own, amongst all her friends and acquaintances; when I am held up as the terror of married women, at the very time that I know I would have at any time yielded the society of Charles to to more lawful claims; how do you think I can bear to live under this load of half-merited ignominy, and half-undeserved reproach? the truth will break, like the sun, through all disguising interceptions: the delicacy of your passion for me, Charles, led you to conceal the fact in regard to my real situation. Wherever you

went, the brilliancy of your wit and the polish of your genius, together with the public evidences you have given of it, attracted notice, ensured popularity, and commanded curiosity—You took me by the hand, and presented me in all our excursions as your *wedded wife*: I did my best to support the character, I would have given worlds to have realized it: but even in my happiest moment, Charles, I felt a pang at my heart, and apprehended a discovery that would have overwhelmed me with the blushes of confusion. In the course of our rambles, your sanction provided for me several amiable friends. I had too much veneration for the *name* of wife to injure it by any
light,

light, or unbecoming behaviour; and I have the felicity to reflect, that my deportment under this assumed character, was in all respects, conjugal and exact: well was it for me, nevertheless, dear Charles, that our passion for travel, did not allow us to stay long in a place. Your situation must soon have been publicly known; even the political *disguise* of your *real* name must have been seen through; your fatal pre-engagement with Cleora would have been detected, and the endearing countenance that was before shewn me, while I lay under the shelter of a charming imposition, would be ignominiously withdrawn. That this, in part *has* been the case, you cannot

not

not but remember: I have occasionally been met by an old acquaintance of yours, who hath officiously circulated the secret of our connexion, and my character became in an instant suspected, or at least ambiguous.

The industry with which I applied to those accomplishments in which it is the chief glory of women to excel, and the books and masters which you recommended to me for that purpose, soon polished simplicity into a degree of refined knowledge, and made me more deserving my Charles's society. And yet, my friend, the agonies of my heart increased with the instructions of my head. Objects and ac-
tions

tions soon presented themselves to me in a different light from that in which I had been accustomed to behold them: the days of girlish giddiness were past, and the sedater reflections of the woman succeeded. From a state of rusticity and village ignorance, I was able to think profoundly and compare accurately; a nicer sense of right and wrong began to take place; an awful admiration for illustrious characters, and a more than enthusiastic ambition to reach them, seized upon my senses: proportioned to the augmentation of my intellectual powers, rose into greater lustre the sensibilities of my soul; and, under the influence of these cultivations, all flowing from the generous stream
of

of Charles's fondness, think what I must in the cool hour undergo, at the thought of living in a state so palpably condemned by mandates above and below; and so forcibly reprobated by every law, divine and human.

It was not, Charles, over the exigences of a precarious fortune, it was not for the loss of your estate, nor was it even for the gradual declinings of your health, that half those tears were shed, which in different places, and at different periods, flowed from me. Studios of your serenity, how often have I repress'd the sigh that was half ready to break its way through my bosom: arm in arm as
we

we walked affectionately together, amidst the perfumes of the spring, or the fragrant profusions of the summer; delighted too as I was with the faithful testimonies of the warmest passion that ever nature rendered mutual, even then, in seasons so sacred to composure, the bitter idea would overtake me, and I have been compelled to complain of some transient pain of the person, to hide from my companion the anguish of the heart. Nay, Charles, I have often sought out a hiding-place when my heart was overcharged, to relieve it by tears. That Cleora and you could not live amicably together, that I was the woman of your choice, that incidents perfectly uncommon united us, that

we

we both lived in the strictest fidelity; that our passion was as elevated as ever inhabited the human bosom, and that we were every thing that is precious to each other, were by no means counterballances to the censure of the world; the violation of moral obligations, the strokes of my own conscience, and the claims of Cleora, which my avow'd residence with you, *seemed* at least to intercept.

Collect yourself sufficiently Charles, to put these several sentiments together: consider them one by one, as you arrange them in due order, and form them into a whole. When you have done this, quiet I beseech you the disorders of every rebellious passion,

sion, and let reason, in her robes of sobriety, sit in judgment. The sentence which she passes will command your attention; methinks I see her from her awful throne, in the center of the human heart preparing to speak—hark, Charles, I hear her voice, and it shall decide between us.——
Persevere Charlotte, persevere in these resolutions, she says. “Forbear Charles, forbear to throw thy temptations again in the path of the penitent.”

The very force of the image of Charles invigorates my virtue, and gives me fresh spirits to persist.

Farewell.

CHARLOTTE.
L E T T E R

LETTER XX.

CHARLES to CHARLOTTE.

A WEFUL, admirable girl, I bow to the dignity of thy superior soul. I yield to the sentiments it is impossible to controvert. Yes, cruel world, I will henceforth bleed in silence a victim to thy circumscribed opinions. Your resolves, Charlotte, are, I perceive, as the rock that defies the batter of the winds and of the waves. Your virtue *commands*, and my passions shall *obey*:

adieu, adieu for ever, to

CHARLES.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

CHARLES,

TO HAMLET TEMPLETON, Esq;

THE struggles of conscience, have again prevailed over the tenderness of love, and I have lived a whole week, without the society, or even the sight of Charlotte. Leave ———I desire you, as soon as possible, and hasten to the apartments of the unhappy

CHARLES.

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LETTER XXII.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

YOUR last short letter was as a cordial to the spirits of a swooning creature. Noble, noble youth, how agreeably you flatter me! and is it possible that Charles can be a convert to the sentiments of Charlotte? has he been so happy as to vindicate her own conduct, and kindle in his heart the sparks of imitation?—imitation did I say? no; my dear friend has twice the power and ten times the goodness of Charlotte, if he will but exert them. Have I not
known.

known him melt and soften into sympathy at the pitiable circumstances of a distressed enemy? have I not seen the tear of gratitude in his eye, and his hands folded together, for pain alleviated, danger escaped, differences accommodated, and comforts multiplied? is he not the friend of all that want, of all that wish? hath not nature directed his hand to his purse to divide with the indigent or the soliciting, the last efforts of his liberality? doth not his *own* miseries teach him to feel for *others*, and suggest to him all the finer obligations of morality?

And can such a character, can such an exalted spirit, long remain insen-

sible to a duty of the greatest magnitude? impossible, impossible! 'Tis I, only I, have been to blame, in winding my fatal image, and destructive affections, round his heart, till it became entangled beyond the power of extrication. Long ago would this excellent young man have recovered the dignity of his duty, had not I prevented it. I should have flown before: since his delicacy was too great to quit *me*, my virtue should sooner have urged me to quit *him*. Perhaps by this time, he might have quite forgotten me, or only at most have recollected me with the indifference I deserve.

It

It is, however, some consolation, that I have at last been equal to the impulses of my reason, and I cannot but hope the most salutary effects will arise from them. Already my dearest friend (for as such I shall ever consider him) is open to conviction: to be *so*, is one great step towards every thing laudable and desirable: to see the path of virtue, and to be pleased with it, is a powerful inducement to pursue it without any future deviations. I rise every morning more reconciled to my separation, and I can command my thoughts from the image of Charles, when I find them wandering that way, with the cost only of a few tears: my slumbers are not indeed sound, nor

can I frequently close my eyes; but I can meditate without distraction, and know the direction of the only man upon earth whom I—I—I whom—whom—I—I say I can reflect upon the very spot, where I suppose Charles to be sitting, without passing by his door, or knocking at it for admittance: for *that* admittance, which I now hope, and believe he will, after the lapse of a few months, refuse me, except upon the terms of an ordinary acquaintance. — No Charles, no: not an *ordinary* acquaintance neither. I could not bear to receive from *you* the forms of compliment, or the cold civilities of a mere well-bred decorum. If we ever do again see each other, let it be with kindness, with attention,

attention, with friendship, and with any thing *from* the extremes either of relapsing fondness, or fashionable disregard: it would be extremely awkward—perhaps it would be utterly impossible for Charles and Charlotte ever to meet upon so ceremonious a visit: nor will it, I dare say, be necessary. The passion will be altered, the sensibilities of love will be extinguished, but the sentiments of a pure and established friendship, may, and *must* remain.

You have now set my heart at rest; and the favours of your pen, upon more lively and interesting subjects, will indulge, while they improve, the now happier

P. S. Not a word yet about my sister Polly ; but you have been too much vexed with your own feelings, and I make myself satisfied she is an innocent cottager at—with her mother.

LETTER XXIII.

CHARLOTTE to CLEORA.

MADAM,

I STILL remain steady in pursuing the measures I have taken: and though my endeavours were twice ineffectual before, yet I now feel myself equal to the sacrifices which my own conscience, and justice to you, require.

require. Your husband seems already to be sensible of my propriety, and ceases to talk upon a subject I am truly labouring to forget for ever. I have heard *your* story and *his*; and I am utterly unable (and a very improper person) to say who is in the right. It is most likely (you will pardon me) that both of you are in the wrong; family differences are much too delicate for one *out* of the family to interfere in them. The injuries, however, I have done you are at an end, and Charles is at full liberty to repair the mischiefs, if indeed they are the heaviest on *his* side) of Cleora. That any thing not extremely substantial should disunite him from so much sense and beauty,

beauty, as you Madam, are possess off, would be such a repugnance to every part of his character, that I cannot readily conceive it possible; and yet, it appears to me full as strange and unaccountable, that so accomplished a lady should not have the power to fix the affections of a man whose heart is extremely tender, and whose love of domestic happiness, is the manifestly first principle of his ambition.

These mysteries make it improper for me to say more, than that I cordially wish (if it is for his felicity, and for yours) that whatever has past may be obliterated; that a single trace of his connection with the most unfortunate

fortunate Charlotte may never interrupt you, and that, whatever becomes of me, you may pass the long remainder of your days in reconciled tenderness, and restored affections.

Although, Madam, I can no otherwise promote this than by my good wishes, and persevering in my good resolutions, yet I think it a part of my duty to tell you, that your husband's present lodgings are at ———.

There, either you or your letters will find him ; and whatever you expect from him, may you receive it from

from his justice, or his sensibility.

I am,

Madam,

the truly penitent

CHARLOTTE.

P. S. I ought to give you the caution of directing to him under cover to his friend Mr. K. whose address you know, and who will deliver your letter immediately on the receipt of it. Poor Charles's situation renders *this* necessary to his personal safety, and neither you, nor I Madam, can be indifferent to that.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

An unknown person to CLEORA.

I AM just informed, Madam, that your circumstances demand the attention of benevolence, and as I know the present situation of your husband (were you both happily united) could not allow him to assist you, I have taken the liberty, as a very old friend to your family, to inclose a modicum, which, though shamefully small, is I protest to you, proportioned to the immediate ability of

Madam,

Your most obliged

humble servant.

LETTER XXV.

CHARLOTTE to CHARLES.

A WEEK's silence, my dear Charles, must sure have done great things: you certainly find it for your ease to lay down the pen which used so frequently to address Charlotte; and, therefore, I submit to the suspension of your correspondence. Possibly I am by this time an object only of friendly, and undisturbed contemplation. I will endeavour to rejoice at the supposition: 'tis what I ought to do.—Now then, my friend, summon yourself to the undertaking: I have made the *first* sacrifice

[III]

sacrifice to virtue; do you collect all your strength to sustain a *second*!

Your wife is now in London, Charles, and the child, which you have so long and anxiously wished to fondle in your arms, is now blooming in beauty, by the side of her. Your barbarous mother (voluptuous in her age, and wicked in her weeds) denies any longer to support or educate the babe, and the little fortune is at present locked up, and is likely to remain so till the sale of that estate of which you have been iniquitously robbed, is completed. In the worst dilemma, however, your talents are always a sufficient resource, for the subsistence of
human

human life. She who indeed loves, will love in all circumstances: she who feels as she *ought* to feel, will follow her object into the worst of all possible situations—What say you to an interview with Cleora? can you not obliterate the idea of the subjects which parted you, and visit each other, without a past unnecessary reflection? I have been several hours in her company. There is nothing in her person but what might attract a husband's attention: her understanding is even masculinely strong. She doats upon the child you have presented to her. She denies the infamous charge that either malice, or wantonness brought against her fame: she is young, handsome,

handsome, accomplished, well born, your real wife, and in distress, oh, heavens! can such a heart as Charles's remain hardened, or can he close his eye upon such a picture—a picture, glowing with the two principal portraits of his own family?

Admitting, however, that you cannot feel upon this occasion all the luxury of a love-match; admitting, that Cleora wants the power to delight; ought she not to be received as a married wife? and though you may want ability to be transported, yet cannot you entertain enough of that friendship, which you always allow to our sex, to live within the limits of propriety? in fine, Charles,

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I

if

if you can avoid absolute aversion on the one hand, and altercation (to which I am sure you are not by nature inclined) on the other, it is a plain point of honour and conscience, to invite her again to your arms.

Believe me, my friend, she is the only woman in the creation I could bear to see there: but I have been the *seeming* instrument of keeping you from her—the *real* one I am sure I have not—and therefore it would give me a pleasure inexpressible to bring you together, even before I have totally conquered my own partialities. Do Charles, do endeavour to give my vanity the gratification
of

of one distinguished action: let me have one opportunity to shew those who have aspersed me, that I had something like a soul at the bottom. Exert yourself, I charge you; and let it be said, that Charles was capable of a dignity in conduct, which was not unworthily emulated by

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER XXVI.

HAMLET TEMPLETON, Esq; to
CHARLES.

AM I never to see my best friend, the amiable Charles, permanently happy? is he for ever

to be subjected to these anxious vicissitudes? and is one of the noblest of human hearts thus constantly to be tortured on the wheel of misfortune? If you bear as ill the third elopement of Charlotte, as you did the first and second, I shall dread to see you: sure never did a young man possess so unfashionable a fidelity: and yet I cannot blame you: the value of the object justifies the constancy and violence of the passion.

“ If to her share some female errors fall,

Look in her face, and you forget them all.”

The

The beauties of your Charlotte, both mental and bodily, are indeed too attractingly eminent to be easily worn from the memory of a man, who hath not only possess'd, but so greatly contributed to polish them.

I have long known her merit; long paid to it the tribute of my admiration; and as long lamented the bar that prevented the union of which she is so truly deserving. From the ripening refinements of her mind, however, and from the ardent precipitation of her temper, tinged as it is with a little both of enthusiasm and romance, I apprehended something of this sort would ensue from
the

the meeting of her and Cleora, should that ever happen.

How unlucky is it that the point is on all sides, too nice and critical to be spoken to. I most heartily wish all wives well, and all lovers happy: above all other things I have *ever* wished it upon solid motives: their hearts were moulded for each other: the joys, sorrows, evil, and good, they have mutually sustained in the course of a long, and faithful interchange, must have bound them in chains of peculiar force. And yet, as the matter *has* fallen out, what has my friend to do, but to exert his philosophy, and call all the powers of reason to his assistance.

I am

I am heartily glad you are in London, where uneasiness of any kind may be whirl'd off, much sooner than in the country. The shades are infectious: rural objects, and especially to a poetical mind, are absolutely so many distractions. I would not have you by any means venture into those parts of the country where you have of late been used to reside. The idea that should not be indulged, will obtrude itself in a moment: every thing you behold, from the leaves of the tree, to the husbandman at his labour, will revive the treacherous image you should eradicate.

Rather, my good friend, pursue a different course: however reluctantly,

rush into mixt and multiplied society.
 Indulge not the softness of relaxing
 solitude. Engage for a short time
 in all the frivolous scenes of busy
 existence. Let the great soul stoop
 a little, and condescend to be amused
 by innocent levities. Superior as you
 are, I would now advise you to fre-
 quent the places of public resort —
 and, in short, I would advise every
 thing gay and airy, except down-
 right dissipation. Against that I
 would caution you; for you already
 know its ineffectuallity. I shall be
 in town on Thursday, and will de-
 dicate my time totally to you. In
 the mean while, pray think of Char-
 lotte only as a departed friend; as
 one who does, and must ever wish you
 well,

well, but whose present absence is necessary to her future happiness. You see Charles, by the dull common-place of this letter, that it is a subject I really know not how to treat. I am honestly the friend of Charles and Charlotte: what then is to be said upon this trying crisis? I will only say, that if the smallest degree of either's happiness depended upon me, my power should be exerted before it could be solicited. Be of good courage: look about you: think little, read less, sigh seldom, smile as often as you can, and God bless you. Such are the hints of your ever faithful servant

HAMLET TEMPLETON.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

CHARLES to HAMLET TEMPLETON,
Esq;

FOR the second time in my life
I am absolutely inebriated—
Dead drunk, Templeton, in the vain
effort of drowning my distraction,
and your letter was delivered to me
over the dizziness of the third bottle.

Charlotte is fixt in the frost of her
resolutions, and I have ceased to ad-
dress her on my subject. Heavy hung
the hours upon my hand, and I have
been endeavouring to shorten them
by forgetfulness — Ah, Templeton !
I have

I have gone suddenly from the extremes of melancholy to those of madness. I called upon a vacant acquaintance, who never felt a poignant woe in his life, who laughs at tenderness, and snaps his fingers at love, and, in the very stupor of my soul, strolled with him into a tavern. I am this moment every thing but delirious, and I have compelled my colleague in dissipation, to drink prosperity to every step of Charlotte—at least at every second glass—In this state of *capital* elevation, what will become of me for the rest of the night, heaven knows ; but as I am certain of being both sick and sorry to-morrow, I am resolv'd not to be either to night.--Heigh--heigh--oh ! Templeton,

pleton! Templeton, what machines we are! obedient to the breath of every passion, tost into tempest by every gust of disappointment or desire. What a fever we are in from fifteen to five and twenty; what an ague overtakes us soon after that, till we are frozen to death and good for nothing—Oh! these violent transitions—I lay down my pen to pledge you in a bumper of good wishes for the health of Charlotte. I would murder my brother if he refused the toast of my heart—Never was I so strongly inclined to break my promise, and go abruptly to her apartment. I could now talk to her like an angel: I could charm her with
claret-

claret-caught eloquence, were she adamant from top to bottom.

“ Hot with the Tuscan grape,
and high in blood,”—by my soul,
Templeton, I am just at this time a
a match for every thing that could
happen to me—I could smoothe the
wrinkles of her dear indignant brow--
I could press her beloved hand with a
tenderness so gentle—I could ad-
vance to her rosy lip with so pathetic
an humility, a countenance so touch-
ing, and a sigh so delicate, that I
should certainly conquer all her scru-
ples, and allure her once more to
the arms that are ever extending
involuntarily, to embrace her. The
fellow who has been the companion
of

of my revels, is both too headless and too heartless to continue any longer — His dull eye twinkles in drowsiness, and he had rather, I perceive, hug his *pillow*, than the goddess of beauty — The wretch absolutely yawns. Oh the negative —! Whatever becomes of me I will never pray, no Templeton, (though agony of soul were to mark every moment) I will never pray for the lethargies of insensibility — I will this instant go to the arms of *smiling* beauty.

CHARLES.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

CHARLES to HAMLET TEMPLETON,
Esq;

CONFUSION and perplexity!
What a mistake have I blundered into! Curse on the power of wine! Curse on the folly that rushes into extremes. In the giddiness of my cups, I hastily prest my seal upon the letter intended for *you*, and addressed it to Charlotte: addressed to *her*, what I had written in the libertine hour of drunkenness and intoxication. The post-office happened to be hard by, where I had been accustomed to throw in my correspondence,

ence,

ence, and as I parted from my fuddled associate, I trusted my licentious epistle to the letter box. Read the inclosed, Templeton, and execrate the stupidity of

CHARLES.

LETTER XXIX.

(Being the inclosed)

From CHARLOTTE to CHARLES.

S I R,

YOU have directed to one friend, what was, I perceive, designed for another: the letter I return to you under cover, will explain the matter.

matter. I shall only observe upon it, that the fair hopes I began to entertain are again destroyed, and I have the worst consequences to apprehend from your desperate, and dreadful conduct. I do not doubt but you put into execution the scheme you projected, and practiced the odious purposes at which you glanced in the concluding lines of your letter to Mr. Templeton! *what*, Charles, are you *already* capable of this? can you, with a more than brutal precipitation, subdue the boasted feelings of tenderness for one woman, and hurry away to make an offer of your person to another?

Indelicate and ungrateful youth !
 separated as we are—could I have
 imagined—could I have even be-
 lieved it possible, that a few days
 should so have prostituted, *what*
 I fondly took to be the most constant
 of hearts ? rather than have com-
 mitted so gross—so disrespectful—so
 barbarous, an action, why did you
 not even venture, as you threatened,
 (wrong as such a step would have
 been) to call upon me. The con-
 dition you were in, would have, in
 some measure, excused you to me—
 I might have advised you to return
 home : I might have—as a friend,
 as a sister—as a parent, pointed out
 to you the palpable sin—guilt—im-
 propriety—barbarity of such an ac-
 tion !

tion! not, Sir, that the action affects me: I have neither right or dominion over you. I speak not upon my own account, heaven knows! so far on the contrary, that in my very last letter, I promised your reconciliation with Cleora. In *her* arms I could almost bear to behold you. But what could lead you to this early violation? who knows what may be the consequence!—who knows what multiplied mischief may spring from it! Ah, my friend, think what a slight constitution you possess—think how long, and assiduously (even with all the attentions and nursings of love) your Charlotte laboured to confirm your health—Perhaps the unhappy female, whose fa-

yours you have thus purchased, may
 be one, who—oh, Charles! you have
 been much to blame; indeed you
 have. I am so truly--so deeply affected
 at this rashness—for *your* sake—that
 I tremble as I sit in my chair; a sigh
 which I cannot repress, bursts from
 my bosom, and a tear which I cannot
 restrain, drops upon my paper. If
 you look closely you will perceive
 where it fell. But that is nothing;
 a friend's health must ever be pre-
 cious—were it not for your health's
 sake, the rashness of your conduct
 would not so much vex me. What
 though you bought a *beauty*—! she
 was extremely handsome no doubt—
 'Tis very strange, Sir, that you can-
 not be contented with having a pretty
 wife

wife for nothing; but you must—in your embarrassed circumstances too—ramble into houses a man of feeling should blush to enter. Do not suppose I want to trace your favourites—I have no such curiosity. Possibly the lady was your *fair incog.* long before I left you. But what indeed is that to me? you are your own master—we are utterly disunited, and, and, and—oh! Charles, Charles, I begin to adopt the sentiment of Cleora, and believe, you never had the least affection for

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER XXX.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

(After receiving the above.)

DEAR, and justly offended Charlotte, forgive me! The agonies I have felt, and still feel from your reproaches, are even more insupportable than the absence which made me rush into the behaviour that deserved them. And yet, (so thrive my hopes for your felicity) I am less guilty than you may be led to guess, from the declarations of a drunken man!

Since

Since the letter has fallen into your hands, I will religiously relate the unextenuated facts.

The lunacy of disappointed love, and the madness of wine, to which you know I am so little accustomed, hurried me, I must confess, into all the distractions of dissipation.

When the partner of my intoxication left me, I was in the street; scarce sensible in my head, and unable to keep my heels. I stood supporting myself for some time against the pillars of a door in a state of irresolution: even then, the image of the relentless Charlotte presented itself; I would have died with plea-

fure the next morning, to have past
 that night in your company. The
 little likelihood of this drove me to
 despair, and calling a coach, I or-
 dered the driver to carry me to your
 lodgings. About twenty yards from
 the house I pulled the check-string,
 and alighted : the moon was in her
 meridian, and I walked on till I came
 opposite your window. The shutters
 were closed ; the streets were quiet,
 and not an object near, except the
 watchman, whose night-box was sta-
 tioned within five paces of your
 apartment. I twined my arms in
 a melancholy folding, and directed
 my eye, as I stood fixed, to that
 part of the mansion which I knew
 you occupied. There is a lane which
 leads

leads to the back of the house, and I got staggering upon the wall that separated the property. Here, Charlotte, as I stood upright on the ridge, I commanded the adjacent apartments.—The extreme warmth of the night had induced the inhabitant to suffer the sash about a third part open, and the cooling breezes of midnight rewarded the design. Ah! God! what were my sensations, when, levelling my eye to the casement, I saw, by the assistance of the moonbeams, (at this time uncommonly bright) a dress that I knew! At the edge of the toilet lay that very huffie which I presented to you so very lately, and whose first employment was to contain the needles which assisted

sisted in making the ruffles you left unfinished. The spotted handkerchief, the cap, the hat, and even the garters you yourself knitted, were there. Spread upon a chair, at a small distance, was a packet of papers, partly unfolded, perhaps the correspondence of Charles—and the curtain on the female side of the bed was undrawn: at the foot it was impenetrably and enviously pinned close together. Imagine, oh! imagine, my situation! for I cannot describe it. The watchman neglected to inspect the lane, though he sat almost at the beginning of it. Love's auspicious god had surely charmed him to rest, for he did not even call his hour after the clock had struck. I remained

mained still undiscovered, and could
 not persuade myself to remove. How
 shall I paint what followed? ah!
 beloved woman, pardon and pity me!
 I brought my ear even with the edge
 of the window-frame, and listened:
 what did I hear? even the balmy
 breath of my Charlotte, heaving
 somewhat interruptedly in slumber.
 I opened my lips, if aught of the
 perfume would reach me, that I
 might inhale it. Five minutes, or
 more than five, did I continue in
 this attitude; and then—mighty
 love assist me ——— then did
 I hear the dearest of women, start-
 ing from her sleep, exclaim——
 “ This should be *his* pillow—here
 should his cheek repose——ah!

Charles,

Charles, Charles, why did we ever meet? this parting will distract me”
 --My heart at this time prompted me to discover myself, and I tremblingly put my hand to the sash, and heaved it higher—I could have stepped into Charlotte’s bedchamber with ease: another lift would have carried me into her arms; but the pulleys rattled, you called loudly to know “who was there,” and I was compelled to descend from the walls of paradise.

The abruptness with which I descended, brought me headlong to the ground, I cut myself with pieces of broken glass, and other rubbish that had been thrown into the lane.

I had:

I had just risen, when I once more looked at the window, where, to compleat my misery, I saw the disrobed, lovely, and beautiful Charlotte, pulling down the sash.

Agitated as I was, I dared not speak. I kept my promise with you, even in drunkenness, and was silent under all these touching circumstances. But what did all these efforts of honour cost me? I thought my senses would utterly have left me!

That nothing may remain concealed, I will disclose even the scenes which succeeded ——— And yet, why *should* I? to what end do I make you acquainted with more instances

stances of my weakness?—you wish me to hate you: you have annihilated my image, and you earnestly desire I should oblivate yours: you detest, you abhor, you laugh at the agonies of

CHARLES.

LETTER XXXI.

HAMLET TEMPLETON, Esq; to

CHARLES.

FOR heaven's sake, my dear Charles, be more guarded: you will destroy the happiness both of Charlotte and yourself. She is palpably

palpably jealous of you : every syllable in her letter declares it. Her tenderness for you is even greater than ever. I conjure you, therefore, not to injure her : continue still to consider her silently as your sister, and I prophecy that something will happen in the course of a little time, to make her as essentially your wife, by the laws of the land, as she is evidently already by the laws of the tenderest love that can possibly be reciprocated. At least give her the indulgence of a short period. I still expect to see you happy together, and I am persuaded, if you let fortune take her own play, without unreasonably interrupting her, she will contrive matters in your favour, till
all

all shall work together for your good. Persecutions and searchings after her at present, will only defeat your purposes. View her, therefore, I again conjure you, as the dearest relation in the world, who cannot possibly live in the same house with you. Surely there is a most delicate consolation in believing yourself most passionately beloved by an *absent* friend. That you *are* passionately beloved, and that you will continue to be so, there is not the smallest doubt: and, give me as a friend, leave to tell you, that, to suppose you are *not*, is a poor compliment to Charlotte: your incredulity, in this case, argues your want of confidence. Depend upon it, if she
 who

who has torn herself from you, ever finds it again in her power (I mean in the power of her feelings) to return, she will not hesitate to crown the warmest wishes of her amiable companion, who, both by habit and inclination, must be too dear to be soon forgotten. Do you think *she* has forgotten you? oh, Charles, you cannot be so ignorant of the workings of nature, nor can you be so insensible to the peculiarly soft heart of her, whose absence you are deploring. Take my word for it, that were you to meet twelve-months hence, your first interview would not be sustained like persons who had buried the remembrance of each other. I judge not romantically,

L

but

but from a knowledge of you both :
 I judge from the scenes of lively,
 and lasting endearment you have both
 experienced : you can no more forget
 one another, than you can forget
 yourselves. Many a sad hour does
 she feel, as well as Charles, and
 much anguish must she undergo to
 support and continue these triumphs
 of her delicacy. Once more, therefore,
 I desire you to let things take
 their course, and, by some stroke of
 providence, Charlotte will assuredly
 be restored to you. I am not
 able to settle my business here so
 expeditiously as I could, for your
 sake, wish. But I must insist on
 your letters giving me all material
 occurrences, since it is impossible
 any

any thing should happen to you, that
can be matter of indifference to

HAMLET TEMPLETON.

P. S. I like not your scheme
of indulging in wine; it
is only one degree more
excusable than indulging
with women. Neither of
these will assist you at pre-
sent; and therefore you
would do better to avoid
both.

L 2 LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

GOOD God, Charles, what a life do you make me lead ! and what real misery hath distinguished the night and the day since the arrival of your last ! how can you be so ingenious to torture your own heart and mine ? Your scene at my window thrills me with horror. What a time to be exposed to the open air : careless and intoxicated too as you were ! what wretchedness must attend your prospect ! How could the impetuosity of your passion suggest such
an

an expedient; dangerous in itself, and painful in its consequences? I hope, however, you have not cut yourself alarmingly: pray get the best advice: glass sometimes sticks within the skin, and gangrenes. Oh! for heaven's sake, take care. Had you staid till the noise brought me to the window, what would have become of us both? to have denied you admittance, would have been, in such a situation, impossible: to have admitted you would have been a fresh gall to those wounds of honour which I am trying to heal. If you regard either my health, my happiness, or my life, never put me again to such severe trials.

If, Charles, the scenes that succeeded this shocking one at my chamber window are such as an eye, not wholly abandoned, may dare to look upon, you may send it to me. I can, however, too readily guess the scope of it : and yet it was, methinks, a strange heart, that could just quit the most pathetic object in the world, and find a gratification, the next minute, in the grossest.

Write, nevertheless, and faithfully write, the honest truth. Tell me how happy you have been made by the miserable she whom gold allured to the man she possibly never saw before. Oh! Charles, where has been your delicacy! or if your pas-
sions

fions rioted over your reason; why, did you not seek to relieve them in the arms of Cleora? Farewell, you have planted a fresh dagger in the bosom of

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER XXXIII.

CHARLES to CHARLOTTE.

HARD-judging Charlotte! you think worse of me than you ought. I have, as you will presently see, preserved my delicacy, in spite of my dissipation; did I not at this time feel too severely the effects of that dissipation, and was I

not sitting up in my bed, in defiance
of a fever that almost parches the
pen as I hold it, I would convince
you of this. But I am quite ex-
hausted, and must defer this matter
to a future opportunity.

I am your afflicted

CHARLES.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIV.

HAMLET TEMPLETON, Esq; to

CHARLES.

I HAVE met an adventure that I think may draw off your mind, in some measure, from its present fatal object of contemplation; and therefore I will describe it as accurately as my memory permits. You cannot too attentively apply yourself to those scenes which amuse the imagination and soothe the fancy.

At

At the house of Mr. — where I now am on a visit (from which I cannot yet politely disengage self) dined the other day, six people of both sexes ; amongst them a stripling, who complained bitterly that he had been abused by the lady of his heart, who, after a courtship (and all its costly consequences) of five years, had left him in the lurch ; kept his presents, stolen his affections, and turned him adrift, in favour of a stupid fellow with a smooth face, a laced coat, and a well-turned pair of legs. This poor swain made a fool of himself all dinner time, could drink little, eat less, sighed every second, and at last solemnly declared he would renounce the

the sex, and set out the next week to seek for indifference, in rambling round the habitable globe.

After this declaration, he sat silent and melancholy for a long time, and really infected the whole company : at length an old gentleman that sat next him, tapp'd him softly on the shoulder, and said, " he was in hopes he did not know in what *real* misery consisted ; and so, continued he, as we are all mighty *English*, and inclined to be pensive, I will tell you the heads of *my* history, from which you will be able, perhaps, to deduce a very useful lesson : namely, that happiness hates to be *hunted*, and is very seldom caught by those, who
violently

violently pursue her. She detests pressing, and must come a volunteer into the service of mortals."

"All our misery, or at least the greatest portions of it, arise from the want of settled and consolidated sentiments—in other words, from submitting to the violence of various passions, without sticking to any one of them upon principle. This has been my misfortune; take care that it is not yours. I am now, you see, in the decline of life, and yet, from the time that I came to years of discretion, as *indiscreet* people too often call them, I have been changing different shadows; and fluctuating, tempest-tost, betwixt opposite opinions.

opinions. At my first coming into
 the world, a mere novice in all
 respects, (as it were, in the very
 morning of existence) fancy, and
 curiosity threw before my eye a thou-
 sand gay and glittering appearances.
 I could neither engage in a dance, or
 make one at a dinner, or attend a
 concert, or visit any place of public
 diversion, without receiving some un-
 lucky impression in favour of objects
 either recommended by their novel-
 ty, or to which I was invited by
 the ardour of my temper. I, like
 you, had a free hand, a liberal soul,
 and a susceptible heart: my spirits
 were lively, my ideas excursive, and
 fancy for ever on the wing. The
 ruling propensities of my nature
 were

were social, and, I cultivated with a vigour peculiar to young people, all the friendly and interesting connections."

"To rescue my friend, or to prove my fidelity to him, I set at nought hazard, embarrassment, and enterprise, with all the enthusiastical vehemence of a knight-errant. My efforts were without the least mercenary mixture, and my opinions conceived and admitted without any suspicion. Having indulged this luxury of the young man for some time, till certain tokens of insincerity somewhat cooled my ardour, I was taught by experience, the necessity of caution, and found it wholesome

some

some to alter a little the system I had adopted: instead, therefore, of falling in love at first sight, of conferring indiscriminate favours, of fixing promiscuous friendships, or of lavishing offers of service to all men, without caution or distinction, I was tempted to enter into intercourses of a more stationary kind: my appetites were now less refractory: imagination had enjoyed her frolic, and the curiosity of a rambling, romantic heart was satisfied. I now resolved to begin the world on a new principle: I courted a young woman eminently beautiful, and obtained her hand: from this moment I entertained notions, views and wishes, utterly the reverse of my former ones: fortune—
 interest—

interest—children—family and posterity, all crowded upon me: the shilling, which in my late bachelor-state I should have toss'd carelessly away, I turned very deliberately, and placed it as an accumulated twelve-pence in my drawer."

"At the end of a year my wife presented me with a similitude of herself; and the moment it came into the world, I imagined it gave so sacred an addition to my character, that, I remember well, on that very day I bustled into my barber's shop with an unusual strut, and ordered a supernumerary row of curls to my peruke, the better to figure as the father of a family. The succeeding
year

year gave me a son, with whom I was no sooner provided, than I became anxious to provide a fortune to support him. To accomplish this, need I say, that I adopted the most circumspect maxims. I gave nothing without knowing to what end. I engaged in a good business, entertained but seldom, threw myself as little as possible in the way of pleasurable temptation, rose up early in the morning to the account book, and knowing my infirmity (for you must know I always loved wine) I kept the bottle out of sight. Yet, in reward of this self-denial, I eat hearty, slept sound, and repaired the constitution, which the career of the former part of my life had deplora-

M

bly

bly shaken. For several years I applied myself to the maxims of gain, and, in the end, obtained by such industry a considerable fortune."

"About this period my sentiments underwent *another* total alteration : from the domestic friend and man of business, I shifted to the man of magnificence and parade ; and just as I had, by dint of infinite drudgery, obtained a good fortune, I took it into my head to spend it like a fool. As you are in *love*, young Sir, you know something about human inconsistency, and therefore will not wonder at this apparent lunacy. Well, Sir, I took it into my ridiculous head, as I was saying, to purchase

chase a piece of ground on the side of a hill, in the county of Somerset: upon this hill, I had the nonsensical ambition to build a spacious house, and in this house, to my shame be it spoken, I placed pictures and paintings, which, as the learned in those matters *told me*, were extremely fine and valuable. I now no longer listen'd to the chatter upon change, the jargon of Garraway's, nor the stupidity of the stocks. I bustled no more in business, took my cash out of trade, set up a chaise, and commenced the *eminent merchant retired from ways, to live upon his means*. I turned a bleak, bare hill behind my villa, into a shrubbery of firs, and the steep descent from before my front door, I converted into

a garden, in which I placed statues of all the great folks ; and, that the matter might be compleat, I ordered a pond to be cut in the centre, that I might have at once wood, water, and fish into the bargain. My wife, however, soon complained that the walls were damp, my children were constantly afflicted with colds : my gardener discovered, that nothing either useful or beautiful would grow, upon account of barren ground ; and the neighbouring gentry, after paying a compliment to my taste in building, pitied me on being unfortunate in the *situation*. I made no more ado, Sir, but upon this, I pull'd (like a true baby tired of my plaything) the whole edifice down, even to the corner-stone ;

stone; and, in the rage of my heart, hurried with my family again to London, where I took lodgings, and, in mere despair and shame, shut myself up for several days."

"My fortune, acquired by the diligence of many years, was too substantial to be much hurt by a single folly. I had indeed thrown away upwards of two thousand pounds, and I had got a pretty deal of experience. Now mark the reverse: from that day to this, I do not believe I have misemployed or misplaced a single penny. You see me now in the last stage of my journey. My wife is in heaven, and my children are in good circumstances: one of my boys has

made a very good piece of arable out of that very ground which was reprobated by the indolent gardener: I have rebuilt the house, so as to make it fine, and warm enough for a farmer; and my third son has persuaded me to buy a pretty parcel of land contiguous to it. As to myself, after all the frolics and vagaries of youth, I have something to line the easy chair of old age: I have an old woman to rub my ancles when the gout hath wrapt them up in flannels; my bed is the softer for being my own buying, and though I do not bid every puppy put his hand into my purse, yet, if he can prove to me that he is not a rogue, and is guilty only of raggedness, I shall never be churl enough to refuse him

him a cast coat that hangs idly collecting dust upon a peg, nor will I send him away in the winter, without warming himself against the weather, by a warm seat in the chimney-corner. Thus young, Sir, you see how fatal it is to indulge imagination : I was the sport of it for a long time, and happy was it for me, that I condescended, in the season of the grey hair, to lead the life of reason."

Here, my dear Charles, the old gentleman ended his story, which, though not absolutely in point, was truly entertaining, and enriched by very pertinent and salutary observations. In all events it will answer a very good purpose, if the recital of it

in any degree alleviates the misery of my friend—a friend, whose joys and woes are always reverberated upon the heart of his

HAMLET TEMPLETON.

LETTER XXXV.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

IHAVE health, or at least strength enough returned to vindicate myself to you; for I feel, that I must ever remain additionally uneasy till I stand fair and unsuspected in your thoughts and opinions.

True

True it is, that I wandered into a house of ill reputation, and did it with a view of burying the image which haunted my repose. The utmost, indeed, that could possibly be expected from such an effort, was not pleasure, but alleviation of pain. Heaven knows I did not hope for happiness from the embraces of venal beauty, but merely to deaden for a moment, the sense of intolerable anguish ; and even this was attempted in the absence or lethargy of every cool and rational faculty. Shall I confess to you, that I sent a creature of convenience for a wretched female, who depended on her daily violations for subsistence ? the messenger delayed, and my spirits sinking in the *interim*, I swallowed a bumper

bumper of champaign, and drank to
 the health of Charlotte, even in my
 debauch. As I was pouring down
 the third glass, now almost daylight,
 I heard the rustle of silks upon the
 stairs. What a sensation did this trifle
 produce ! but, ah ! how unlike *that* I
 had been us'd to feel, when the step
 of Charlotte animated my expecta-
 tion. A female came ; shewy, labo-
 riously adorned, and, as she soon told
 me, just out of bed. I began
 immediately to make comparisons :
 they were indeed *odious*. I look'd
 in the eyes, for Charlotte's love-
 born languishment, and I found
 in their stead artful ogles, misusing
 the lustre of what might once have
 been innocently bright. I surveyed
 the

the face for tender sensibility; the form for engaging deportment, and the dress, for the union of elegance and judgment; instead of which, I beheld confident awkwardness, and a flaunting variety, betraying at once the taste and the trade. The lady, however, to whom long habit had rendered every thing indifferent but finery, called up a look which signified an entire compliance. I must own to my dear friend, that time, place, and opportunity, all favoured. Ah! madam, there was but one thing wanting to compleat the scene. There was only wanting—*inclination*. In a word Charlotte, confess yourself deceived in me; confess that I am less infamously unfaithful than

than you supposed. I was shocked, disgusted, and burst into tears both of remorse and disappointment. As soon as I recovered, I threw five pieces on the table, hung on my sword with a trembling hand, and bade the unfortunate, farewell. Upon this transaction I dare not make a comment, nor have I the courage to expect more than your pity for the yet ardent passion of

CHARLES,

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

CHARLOTTE to CHARLES.

TIS impossible I should speak upon the subject of your last. I rejoice however truly, in the recovery of your health, of which I desire you to be extremely careful, and take the liberty of a tender friend to advise you never will again put yourself unnecessarily in the way of destroying it.

You make me very uneasy about my sister, whom you do not mention
in

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in any of your letters—what can
be the reason of it? nor do you
answer my request in relation to
Cleora.

Adieu,

I am yours

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

CHARLES to CHARLOTTE.

I HAVE this minute received a little money. If you think an apology necessary for my telling you of this, or of dividing it with you, as usual, you must greatly have altered your opinion of

CHARLES.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII,

The Answer.

SEND me as much of the money you have received as is convenient; but do not forget that there is a *third* person in the world less amply accommodated than might be wished by

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

CHARLOTTE TO CLEORA.

MADAM.

CHARLES has sent me what, under my present circumstances, I have no right to detain, and which, for fear of wounding his delicacy, I had not the courage to forbid his transmitting. I do not doubt but he has sent a *proper* message to you ; at the same time I judge it a point of honour, and shall esteem it a very great favour, if you will not be offended at my inclosure, which is undoubtedly the property of Cleora.

CHARLOTTE.

N LETTER

LETTER XL.

CHARLES to CLEORA.

MADAM.

YOU are not to be acquainted that I have lost my happiness. But that is not to be the subject of this address: you complain of your circumstances, and I shall, to the utmost of my very slender abilities, be ever ready to alleviate them. You will please to accept the inclosed trifle, as an evidence of my future intentions.

I be-

I believe you have no idea that it is possible for you and I to be re-united. Without entering painfully into a repetition of the points that at first divided us, I shall only observe to you, that our reconciliation (I mean so far as relates to our living together) is *impracticable*.

I find that *our child* is at boarding-school at a great distance from you : as your money is locked up at present, the support of this must be inconvenient. I have been long anxious to see, and have my share of the pleasure arising from, the society of the child ; and I will now venture to request that I may be allowed to take

upon me the care of its education: under my own eye. It shall receive from me all the tenderness and delicate affiduities of a father. I will lead it up in the paths of honour; not a sentiment shall be inculcated but those that will inspire her heart with virtue, or accomplish her head with understanding. Surely madam, though it is necessary we should remain separate, it is by no means so that we should, in any degree, alternate, or entertain against each other a single sentiment of antipathy. I beseech you therefore to allow me the common pleasure of a parent: as the child is apart from you at present, it may as well remain under my protection as that of a stranger.

I have

I have thoughts of placing it near me at an excellent seminary, of which I will, at the proper time, give you the direction, that you may favour the object of our mutual delight with your visits, and maternal attention: only trust it to my care, and I shall be satisfied.

I do not insult you with a sentence in relation to a late connection. Whatever were the disagreements betwixt you and me, may they never be communicated to the curiosity of the public: and as to my intercourses elsewhere, may they never come within your knowledge to distress you.

Farewel.

I am,
your obedient servant,

CHARLES.

LETTER XLI.

HAMLET TEMPLETON, ESQ;

TO CHARLOTTE.

DEAR MADAM,

IT is not without great uneasiness, I find it necessary to be the amanuensis of your old correspondent Charles, who is in a condition that renders it impossible for him to take up the pen at present. In a word, madam, he is wounded, and I seriously fear at the point of death. The cause of this you will better learn from
from

from the inclosed, than from any thing I can possibly say upon the subject. He wishes exceedingly to hear from you, although he does not know that I am addressing you; and therefore I must beg you will not take any step to acquaint him by what means the news of his illness arrived.

I am, with the best wishes for the health and happiness of both,

Dear Madam,

your most obedient,

humble servant,

HAMLET TEMPLETON.

N 4

LETTER

LETTER XLII.

CHARLES,

TO H. TEMPLETON, ESQ;

(Inclosed in the above.)

I WRITE to you with my left arm in a sling, and a ball in the bottom of my breast, as yet vainly endeavoured to be extracted: the anguish of my mind exceeds that of my body, and I have no relief but from writing to you; and that is a relief although it is not without a great deal of pain I hold the pen: my surgeon, however, has left me for an hour,

hour, and I am resolved to employ the interval of his persecutions, in relating to you the principal circumstances of a quarrel that ended in blood on both sides.

I was on Tuesday last at a public dinner in the city, whither I went (in the hand of an acquaintance) on purpose to dissipate a little, and to expel thought, by looking about me. The glass was briskly circulated, and after we had run rapidly the round of general healths, such as the king, church, royal family, &c. &c. we came home to the private toasts of the heart, and drank each to the prosperity of his passion, and the happiness of his mistress. In the sincerity
of

of my heart, I verged a little upon common ceremonies, and gave the divine Charlotte. I was pleased to see many politely ready to fill his glass of good wishes; but a person at the other end of the table repeated her name two or three times sarcastically, and at last, in a kind of half whisper, told his companion that she was to be *had* at —, but that her price was confoundedly high. I desired an explanation of this — smoke the *favourite*, said the gentleman, simpering to his companion. — The companion called to order, and I sat down: we drank freely, and though my heart lay burning within my bosom, I did not revive the subject, 'till the toast came round

round to the person who had insulted me. He proposed a lady: I drank her health, and then apologizing to the master of the treat for being unable to stay longer, withdrew.

I retired hastily into a room belonging to the same tavern, and soon found from my landlord, the name and quality of the person which at present employed my thoughts; he was an half pay officer of —'s regiment. Pen and ink being brought, I wrote as follows:

The companion called to order, and I sat down: we drank freely, and though my heart was burning within my bosom, I did not revive the subject, till the toast came.

T

To Lieutenant A——.

SIR,

YOUR profession leaves your courage unsuspected. Without commenting, therefore, on wanting the manners of a British soldier, I have only to hint, that you have *insulted* a gentleman, who is waiting for you where the bearer will privately conduct you. I am stepping out to prepare *properly* for your reception, as I presume neither of us are prepared in that way ; but I shall return immediately.

After I had folded up, and sent the waiter with this billet, I went to a
gunsmith's

gunsmith's in the neighbourhood, and soon provided a brace of pistols, with which I returned. The officer sent a verbal message by the servant, that he should not attend to such kind of engagements 'till the company broke up, and perhaps after that he might be in a humour to correct a stripling, who was hot enough to fight for his w——. Stung beyond measure at this, I ran abruptly into the dining-room, and placed myself opposite to the insulter. He was that minute entering into what he was pleased to suppose the history of our former separation, having heard, as it appeared, some absurd story on that subject. He broke off upon my entrance, and filled his glass : just as he was.

was lifting it to his lip, I rose, and in a whisper told him my contemptible opinion of a *scoundrel*, especially when he happened to disgrace a cockade. The colour of rage immediately rose over our hero's countenance, and he threw the contents of his glass into my face. All measures being now taken between us, I withdrew a second time, and the lieutenant was held by his companions.

My pains, Templeton, are so acute,
I must rest a little.

L E T T E R

LETTER XLIII.

CHARLES,

To H. T. Esq;

In Continuation

I WENT to a coffee-house, that luckily faced the door of the tavern, so that when the lieutenant came away it would be impossible for him to escape unseen. In about an hour he came out by himself without his hat, as if he had stolen from the company, upon some necessary pretence, and was desirous to find me. I shewed myself.—The lieutenant beckoned to me, and I followed him. With the first opportunity he

he called a hackney coach, into which we both got, and rode in it sullenly till we came to the apartment of the Lieutenant. Both of us threw down a shilling for the fare, because either disdained the obligation, in such a case, of being treated. He conducted me into a large well furnished dining-room, where, after having turned the key, he begg'd pardon for not attending me at the first summons, and proposed an immediate accommodation of differences.—We fought—he conquered—I fell.—

I must pause Templeton, a second time: the surgeon knocks at the door. My anguish is severer than ever.

L E T T E R

LETTER XLIV.

CHARLES to H. T. Esq; in conclusion.

I AM much more mangled without being more relieved: after near an hour's misery, the ball remains in my body, and I am not able to finish my account of the duel. The surgeon begins to look awful: his eye seems to menace actions still more bloody. He has almost cut into my heart. The next experiment will probably discover it to the spectator: ah, that Charlotte was then present — ah, that she could *see* it

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throbbing for her—after that I could wish its motion to cease for ever.

But no matter. You are my friend—I shall never acquaint Charlotte with the transaction, its motives, or its consequences—you are my friend: if therefore you wish to see me alive, hasten to

CHARLES.

LET

LETTER XLV.

CLEORA to CHARLES.

S I R,

A Correspondence would be inconsistent. I shall most certainly endeavour to keep you and Charlotte asunder. That I have been instrumental in so good a measure is my chief glory, even though I have not the most distant idea of being with you myself: nay, even though you now want the power to please

CLEORA.

P. S. I shall not trust the child from its mother's protection.

L E T T E R XLVI.

CHARLOTTE to H. T. Esq;

CHARLOTTE intreats Mr. Templeton to be in the bird-cage walk of St. James's park, within fifty paces of Buckingham gate, this evening at seven o'clock, where a relation of Charlotte's, who has the greatest desire to see Charles, will be extremely obliged to Mr. T. if he will conduct him (as he is a stranger) to Charles's lodgings.

Beseeches

Beseeches Mr. T. will not fail to come; and that in the mean time the matter may not be mentioned to Charles, for whose illness Charlotte is truly concerned.

LETTER XLVII.

H. T. Esq; to CHARLOTTE.

MR. T. will certainly observe Charlotte's appointment, and conduct her kinsman to the unhappy Charles, from whose body the ball is this minute dislodged, at the price of such incisions and torments as

surely no other man has the fortitude to bear. In the height of the torture, as the blood was flowing from the flesh, he press'd Mr. T.'s hand, and told him in a whisper, even with a smile on his face, that he was suffering in the cause of the vindicated Charlotte.

The injunctions mark'd in the note, will be religiously attended to by Mr. Templeton.

L E T.

LETTER XLVIII.

From the same to the same.

I DARE not advise at present, either a discovery, or a second experiment. The spirits of poor Charles are in too great a hurry, and as his fever intermits, it might be more dangerous than if it was, as before, perfectly delirious. Depend upon it I will never leave him, and tell you, from time to time, very faithfully, how he goes on.

The Lieutenant who wounded him
sends a polite enquiry every day.
His cure, and *your* felicity, would
give the sincerest satisfaction to

H. T.

LETTER XLIX.

CHARLOTTE to H. T. Esq;

IT is not romance; it is not a
flight of fancy; I must see him
again—I must see him instantly—
Fear not any discovery; I will thicken
my disguise—I will discolour
my

my cheeks—I will stain my complexion—I will do any thing so as you will yourself keep my secret, and let me see him this night. Write directly, and say that you will call upon me by seven o'clock : I will wait even till eight with patience ; but if you cruelly exceed that hour——ah ! Mr. Templeton——
I must—indeed I must see him.

CHARLOTTE.

LET-

L E T T E R L.

CHARLOTTE to H. T. Esq;

PARDON my impatience—pardon such perpetual messages and letters. I write now, only to tell you of an expedient—tell me the name, and give me the address of Charles's surgeon. I'll acquaint you of my reasons for this, speedily. I hope no turn for the worse has happened since my last. What an unfortunate creature am I to occasion such complicated mischief to so amiable a man!

The bearer waits for an answer,

CHARLOTTE,

L E T.

LETTER LI.

H. T. Esq; to CHARLOTTE.

DEAR MADAM.

THE surgeon who has the care of Charles, is named Melbank, and his residence is in St. James's-street. I am very sorry again to acquaint you that our wretched friend is in the delirium of a fever, in its worst state, and calls ravingly, several times in an hour, on his Charlotte. Mr. Melbank is to bring with him in the morning, or perhaps this

this evening, another surgeon of eminence, and a physician, resolving to proceed no farther without assistance.

I am,

Madam,

your humble servant,

H. T.

LETTER LII.

CHARLOTTE to Dr. MELBANK.

I AM interested Sir, beyond expression, in the life of your patient Charles, and have been, in some measure, the occasion of his present disorder,

order. There are the most delicate reasons why I would not, just at this crisis, pay him an open visit ; but if you will take me in your hand, under the disguise of a student in physic and surgery, I will provide myself with the dress, and wait upon you in the evening. Oh Sir,—it is vain to attempt these transparent concealments. *I* am the most miserable CHARLOTTE. I am that unhappy girl for whom he fought, for whom he was wounded. Mr. Templeton has, no doubt, made known to you the particulars of your story. If he has —am I not to be pitied? am I not to be justified in taking a step apparently romantic, but truly affectionate, truly innocent, in order to see the man
whom

whom I have plunged into blood?
Notwithstanding this, I will not call
upon you till permitted, and I beg
you will on no account reveal this
circumstance to any person, unless
to Mr. Templeton.

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER LIII.

CLEORA to CHARLES.

AND so Sir, I find you have
demanded satisfaction of a cer-
tain gentleman for only speaking
slightly of Charlotte's constancy, al-
though

though you could suffer several licentious young fellows to circulate the most infamous falshood to the dishonour of your wife's character. But this I suppose, in the fine gentleman's calendar, is *gallantry*, and I must set it down to the account of *genteel life*.

CLEORA.

LETTER LIV.

H. T. Esq; to CLEORA.

MADAM.

FAR be it from me to interpose a single sentiment betwixt two persons of the same family at variance;

ance ; but just for the present I am
desired by the surgeon to beg you
would forbear any severity in your
letters ; and, indeed, if you knew
Charles's present situation, you would
at least stay till he is able to defend
himself, by holding the pen to an-
swer you.

I am,

Madam,

your obedient servant,

H. T.

LETTER

LETTER LV.

CHARLOTTE TO CHARLES.

YES, Charles, I confess it. It was Charlotte who took you by the hand: it was she who came into your sick chamber, under the disguise of a man's habit, and smoothed your uneasy pillow! nor do I repent, or blush at it. As I perceive you are pleased at it, I rejoice in the stratagem, and defy the sneers of such as have the heart, in those circumstances, to withstand the best of its impulses. I enjoin you, oh! my dear

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Charles,

Charles, to compose yourself, and remember that in your life is involved the life of

CHARLOTTE.

LETTER LVI.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

I KNEW it was impossible to be mistaken. I knew it by a thousand circumstances! by the brow of alabaster delicately meander'd by the cerulian of the veins—by the silken eye-lash—by the soft pressure of the hand—by the rosy lip—ah, Charlotte! my

my very senses returned to welcome you ; pain stood suspended, and pleasure advanced ! my wound was well for the moment—my heart acknowledged you. Did I not lay your dear hand upon it ! did it not bound in gratitude ! —

What can I say, Charlotte. I am easier—I am better—I shall soon be well. And is your life indeed wrapt up in mine ? be it so. Your wishes will be granted. Heaven will spare Charles for the sake of Charlotte. What wonders have you worked in a moment—a single interview !—

Oh, Charlotte!—I shall live and recover—I shall be happy. The barbarous surgeon commands me to lay aside the pen. *He* never felt the—He takes away my ink-stand.

Adieu.

CHARLES.

LETTER LVII.

HAMLET TEMPLETON Esq; to Sir
HENRY TEMPLETON.

OH my dear father assist me: the oldest, and best, and most ingenious friend I have in the world, is now on the bed of sickness, and in want of a small supply of cash to answer

answer the exigences of so pathetic a situation. He has been dangerously wounded in a duel, and is now slowly recovering. The loss of a large estate in the court of chancery; a disagreement in his family; and a thousand other severe strokes of hard fortune, attend him. I know your generosity, Sir, and beg leave to invite it on this most interesting occasion. Ah! my dear father, you know not how extensive a happiness I could make, were you to transmit me an order for the trifling sum of fifty pounds! if I cannot obtain it any other way, from your liberality, I entreat that it may be considered as so much in advance of my next year's allowance. I will live the more saving and economical in order

to serve my friend. But why do I say this? you will applaud my sentiments: you will encourage the noble feelings of social sympathy, and congratulate yourself and your son. 'Twere unnecessary to observe that my poor friend has been already reduced to part with several things of value, which I have, one by one, carried in the dusk of the evening, to those who lend money to the children of distress, upon depositing the very necessaries of life.

I am,
honoured Sir,
your most dutiful,

H. T.

LETTER

LETTER LVIII.

SIR HENRY TEMPLETON, to HAM-
LET TEMPLETON, Esq;

NOW the murder's out I find.
I shall forbear henceforward
to wonder at your extravagance, or
at the various shifts you are driven
to, to support it. Upon my word,
young gentleman, you are a mighty
pretty fellow ; a very prince of ge-
nerosity ; a perfect Pilades ! and pray
who *is* this heroic Orestes ? but no
matter ! and so you want to fleece
the old fellow out of fifty pieces, do

P 4

you ?

you? very well pushed, I must confess; but it won't take. I warrant you now, if I should be blockhead enough to send you a draft for this money, you and your friend would be both cured of your sickness and your sorrows, and hug yourselves happily at having humbug'd the old put of a father.

I am mightily tickled with the compliment you pay my generosity, at the expence of my prudence. As much as if you had said to a lady, madam, I admire your eyes, if they were not in the way of your nose, and I am charmed with your teeth, only it is a pity they overhang your lips.

— Between you and I, Sir, it is not quite

quite clear to me whether your generosity, as you call it, will not one day or another exalt you above the heads of the people, and give you a pre-eminent *exit* at Tyburn. Why, you no more mind fifty pounds than fifty flea-bites, or so many snaps of the finger. Do you know Sir, that fifty pounds will buy me a pair of horses for my carriage — that it will equip me in cloaths for two years? — that it is more than you ought to have *per annum*, and find every thing; although I am fool enough to double it?

If I will give you an order for this sum, you will live more *economically* — so you *can* live more *economically*,
can

can you? why, you are a prodigal by your own confession, and I have a great mind to sink the half of your allowance from this day, till you are pinched into prudence! I can't conceive where the plague you got that cursed talent for lavishing money! none of my family, nor any of your mother's, were ever spendthrifts. We were all upon the saving order. Zounds, sir! I have had three sets of buttons upon one suit of cloaths: but you scorn to set any thing off savingly, and by the way of Cheap-side, as I used to express myself. I have absolutely heard you laugh at soling a pair of shoes; you never would suffer my taylor to turn cloth of eighteen shillings per yard; and

and I have seen you toss up your nose at a fine-drawn stroke in the elbow! for all this, you can condescend to go skulking with a bundle under your arm, in the dusk of the evening, to a pawn-brokers! Zounds, sir! what a low-spirited dog you must be! to run into such a horrid place, with a coat, a shirt, and an old pair of stockings!

To be plain, young man, I do not expect any good from you while you are so consumedly liberal, and ready to give away your money to every concomb or impostor that asks for it. But 'tis as I ever said, "lightly come lightly go." Be that as it may: I will not send you a single shilling to
 spend

spend in such romantic purposes : and I would rather relieve any wound than that occasioned by a duel. Every fellow that dares to lift up his hand against the life of another, ought to smart for it ; and I should be sorry, for any one to escape out of such an infamous encounter without the loss of a limb, or a scar at the least. If the truth was known, I don't doubt but your friend fought for a wench, or because he was drunk, or because he wanted better and wiser employment. Let the fact, however, be what it will, I am very angry that you should be a very great fool yourself, and that you should endeavour to make me a much greater. I am, your offended father,

HENRY TEMPLETON.

L E T T E R

LETTER LIX.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

I Continue to mend, and yet the inhuman Melbank still denies me the use of pen and paper ; but, I have bribed my nurse to buy me some, and she keeps it under lock and key. These physical folks are such pedants—Can any thing in nature so soon or so effectually contribute to my recovery as writing to, and hearing from, the amiable Charlotte? Her sense—her elegance—her delicacy—her gentleness—her love—I mean her *friendship*, are all so many cordials to me. I lay them—I lay the letters

letters which contain the marks of them, upon my pillow, and they add softness to the down—I press them upon my bosom, even till they touch my wounds, and they act as the healing balm, or restoratives of life, health, and joy—I then carry them to my heart, and it pants to confess from whence they came. How then can this cruel Melbank tell me that I must stifle such ideas—such actions—how can he say they will agitate me into a relapse? You, Charlotte, are acquainted—you have perhaps some interest with Cleora. If so, intercede with her, I beseech you, for my child. She never sees it herself, and yet she will not allow it the shelter of a father's arms. She is
every

every way unkind. But I must not indulge melancholy reflections. I already feel the effect of them. My spirits are fluttered—my pulses are irregular. Melbank is coming to dress my wound. I wish to heaven I was well enough to discharge him! I had rather die than be denied to correspond with Charlotte. Melbank is at the door. The nurse shall hurry away my writing instruments.

Adieu !

CHARLES.

L E T.

LETTER LX.

Dr. MELBANK to CHARLOTTE.

YOU delay the recovery of your friend's health, madam. Your letters disorder and affect him too much. Every thing that alarms, every thing that excites a tumultuous passion, should be most cautiously avoided in his present state. You cannot conceive what an injury you are doing, and all the endeavours of nature and a surgeon will be ineffectual if you do not desist. I will give you a call this afternoon, and explain the nature of this mischief
more

more explicitly. In the mean time,
I hope you will excuse the well-
intended advice of

Your obedient servant,

ERSKINE MELBANK.

LETTER LXI.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

MY friend, Mr. Templeton, is
suddenly summoned from
my chamber, to attend the fu-
neral of a superannuated cousin, at
Sir Henry, his father's seat, in the
country; and the close-handed old
baronet, only sent him an order for
five pounds to carry him almost an

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hundred

hundred miles, though he is heir to near seven thousands a year. As this great consolation is taken from me, let it inspire the benevolence of Charlotte, and then she will charitably employ her pen in forwarding the recovery of

CHARLES.

LETTER LXII.

Dr. MELBANK to CHARLOTTE.

NOtwithstanding, dear madam, what I urged to you, in tenderness to your friend Charles, last night, in regard to the danger of
writing

writing pathetic letters before the nervous system could bear such alarming concussions, I would not, on any account, have you take any notice of this friendly hint to my patient. He might misconstrue it. Young men of lively spirits, and animated tempers, are apt to mistake. *You*, however, see my motive, and will take your measures accordingly. I cannot but use this opportunity to applaud the dignity of your resolutions in regard to the separation. 'Tis an effort even superior to the virtue of the Spartan Ladies : 'tis Roman—'tis Christian! How much ought you to be celebrated for so illustrious an action! and how infinitely ought Cleora to sound your praises!

at the same time, my good lady, are you not a little too enterprizing to continue the correspondence? was it not a little too much in the novel strain to come in a boy's habit, and display such various beauties to the eye of Charles, in such a situation—softened as he was by sickness, touched as he must be at the discovery? you recollect to what an embarrassment he was reduced: did not he faint? did not he fall lifeless on the pillow? and was it not with great difficulty you yourself could support the conflict? suffer me to say, such trials, if frequent, would stagger the firmest philosophy, and I doubt, it is at best rashness to put too much confidence in our own strength when we
oppose

oppose it to those passions which too often turn strength into weakness. It is certainly your duty to avoid the temptation as much as possible, and this you can do, only by assiduously avoiding every thing that reminds you of the object. Don't you know, my dear Madam, that in epidemic distempers, we are only secure, while we escape the touch of the contagious person? and with respect to wounds of the mind, they are like those of the body; if we venture abroad too soon, or, thinking ourselves quite cured, if we run hastily into circumstances that hurt us before, we shall, in all human probability, have a return of our complaint; and a

Q 3 relapse,

relapse, in either case, is often worse than the first attack.

To drop, however, the language of my profession, and speak as a moralist, I must every way, and by every argument, recommend it to you to lay aside the corresponding pen: every line in every letter stirs the embers, which, if not meddled with would go out, till, in the end, the fatal passion which at first kindled the original flame, would be utterly extinguished. But, I beg pardon. I am too hastily assuming the soft authority of friendship. I confess, madam, your merit has greatly interested me in your welfare; and *this*, with the duty I owe to my patient,

tient,

tient, and the sincere love I bear to virtue, will unite to plead my excuse for the great freedom I have taken.

My sensibility is exceedingly hurt at your offering to settle Charles's account with me, for my attendance. I am well informed, madam, of that young gentleman's misfortunes, and my chief uneasiness upon that subject arises from not knowing *how* I can assure him the visits I have paid him were on the score of a friendship, which his merit hath powerfully excited in the breast of

E. MELBANK.

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LETTER LXIII.

CHARLES TO CHARLOTTE.

TWO days run away, and not *one* letter? but you may be ill—you may be incapable of writing—Oh! heaven forbid that! I would rather find myself neglected, than have you furnished with an apology from real indisposition. Yet, indeed, Charlotte, if you *can*, you *should* write, and write longer letters than ever. There is more necessity for such an indulgence. I am very weak; my wound heals tardily—my friend is absent, and a nurse's officiousness,

ness, is by no means like the tender attentions of a lover or a friend. Ah! what a blessing would my Charlotte's society now be! how might she support me with her kind arm as I made gradual efforts to walk across my chamber: from her hand how acceptable would be the bitterest draught, and the most nauseous drugs that could be administered! in the middle of the day, when the sun favoured the attempt, here might Charlotte lead me to the opened window till I revived: the balmy air would be additionally salubrious, the warm beams of noon would be doubly genial, if Charlotte was by my side. But this is impossible — yet surely it is not impossible to give me
the

the only comfort I can now receive !
 —the innocent comfort of a daily
 letter ! the most rigid enemy could
 not deny me that ! and will Char-
 lotte then deny it ? write, I charge
 you, and gild my solitary sickness
 with one ray of satisfaction !

CHARLES.

LETTER LXIV.

From the same to the same.

THE date of a card I have
 this instant received from a
 person in the city, puts me in mind
 of a circumstance that brings the
 tears

tears of tender congratulation into
 my eyes. It is the 18th of August!
 my watch, which hangs at the head
 of the bed, points betwixt the hours
 of eight and nine! It is the anni-
 versary morning of my Charlotte's
 birth! it is the returning day of the
 year, that gave to the world one
 of the best and loveliest of women!
 the sun darts chearfully into my
 chamber: the sky is uncommonly
 azure! I have opened the casement,
 and am saluted with a breeze more
 balmy and serene, than I ever felt in
 my life. There is a grape-vine run-
 ning along the wall, till its tendrils
 ambitiously twist round my window,
 and come mantling into my bed-
 room. The foliage on the outside is
 uncommonly

uncommonly luxurious! and since I have been confined, a red-breast has nested amongst the leaves. He is this moment in the sweetest thrillings of his domestic song! Even so near the bustle and buildings of the metropolis, I have all the advantages of rural life! Every thing around me seems to compliment my Charlotte! What then must I feel upon the subject? how must I be touched—with what an ardent sincerity must I wish this day, and every revolving one—every eighteenth of August—how—how, I say, must I pray—how supplicate the powers of happiness and health that

“This

" This day may be always sacred ;
 No mourning, no misfortune happen
 on it ;
 That it be mark't with triumphs and
 rejoicings ;
 That happy lovers still may make it
 holy
 And ever choose it to endear remem-
 brance !"

From the bottom of my heart I hail
 the return of this delightful morn-
 ing. And yet, Charlotte, how cruelly
 busy is fancy in the breast and brain
 of a man under certain influences ?
 what a train of objects now rise be-
 fore me ? what a vision is Imagi-
 nation drawing ? how she swells
 upon the canvass ? what a glow in
 her

her colouring? what animation in her touches? there is character in every stroke of her pencil; her figures are from the life. She has a hand that throws Raphael into despair. Her exact similitudes captivate the eye, and her resemblances subdue the heart!

Methinks I now see how Charlotte employs the present day; she invites the numerous circles of those that wish her well: the feast is prepared: the lovely entertainer in the bloom of beauty and youth, sits at the head of the table as goddess of the banquet. She delights more by her senses, her wit, and her politeness, than by the delicacies of her board.

And yet can it ever Charlotte, ah! can it ever be forgotten, in what Charles used to engage upon this day! will not his attention to the very hour, the minute—the second of her birth, be long remembered? With what a more than bridal vigilance did he watch the returns of this auspicious æra! how did he fondly busy himself in birth-day preparations—love constant, exalted love inspired, his conduct upon these occasions. It was love that invited the sun to shine on that day with a conspicuous lustre: it was love that provided the ornament, and decorating novelties which were then, for the *first time*, to be worn: it was love that wept over the sparkling glass: love it was which gave

gave the congratulating kiss—and it was love which smiled as the day closed, and as the indulging night advanced, to give you, all accomplished, to my embraces.

Surely these recollections will, even in the midst of natal festivity, revive those sentiments in the sympathizing bosom of Charlotte, which will bestow one tender sigh to the memory of affection, and



CHARLES.

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